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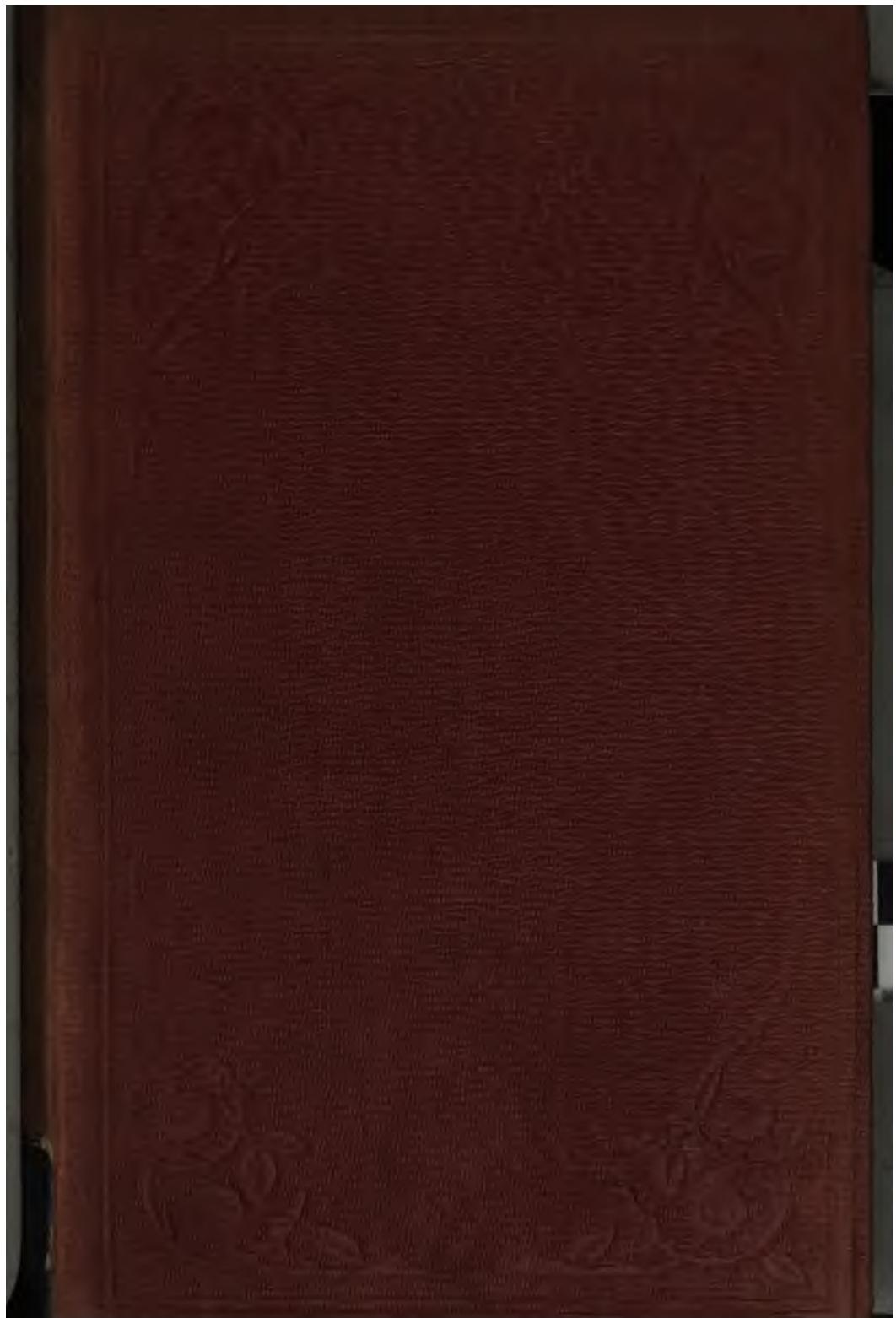
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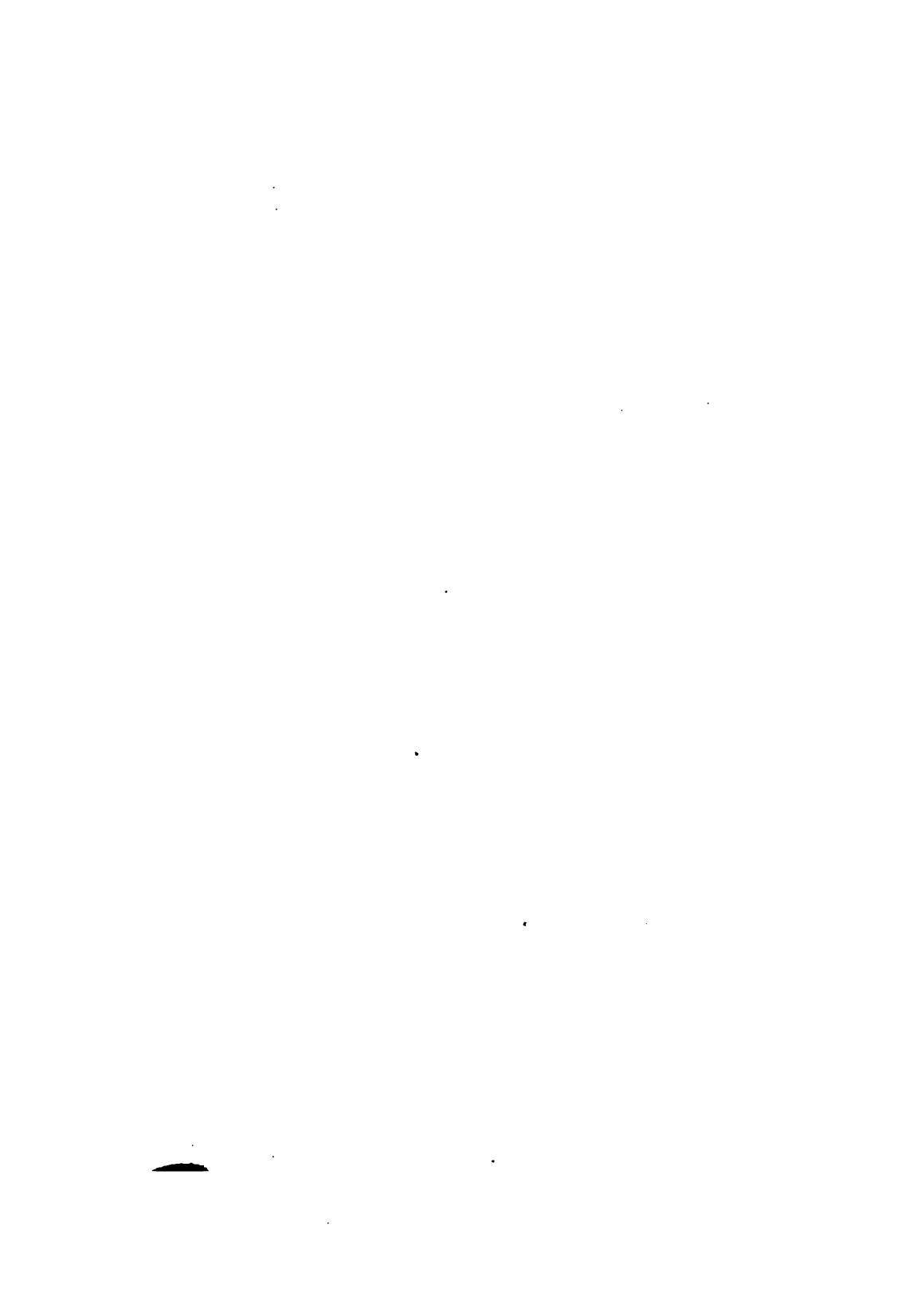


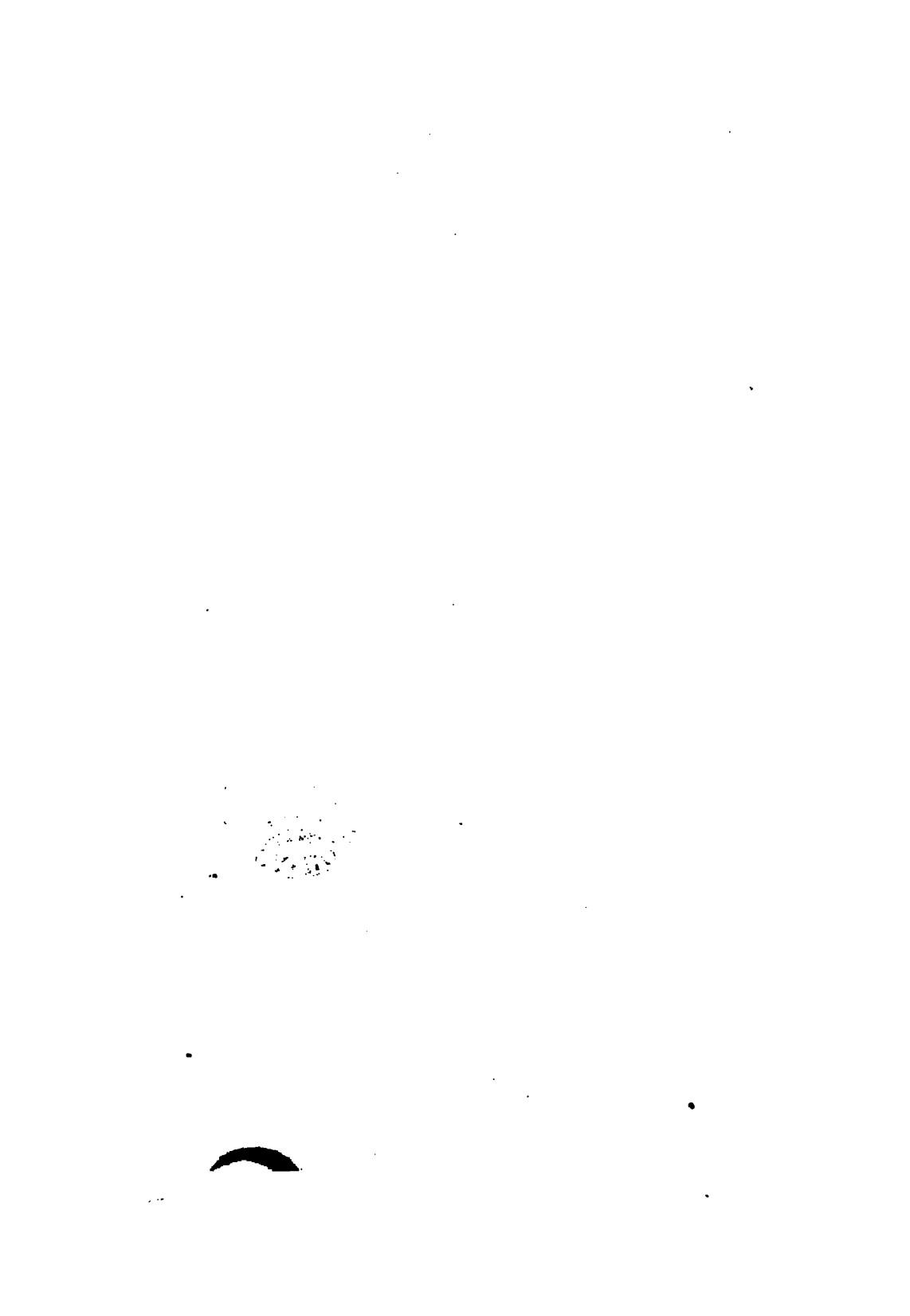


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D O Ñ A B L A N C A
OF NAVARRE.

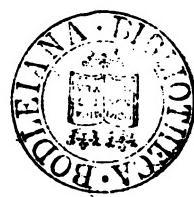
An Historical Romance.

BY

DON FRANCISCO NAVARRO VILLOSLADA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DOÑA BLANCA OF NAVARRE.

CHAPTER I.

BUT the Count de Lerin did not lose a single moment in carrying his design into execution, displaying all his energy and activity in hastening his daughter's marriage. The exertions and the anxiety which it had cost him to arrange this business, for it was only in that light that he regarded it, could only be equalled by the strenuous efforts which he now employed to stamp with an indelible seal the alliance of the two most powerful families of Navarre.

Above all things, he laboured to convince Catalina that love for her country imposed on her the duty of sacrificing for its good even her own happiness, if that were necessary, and much more the vain scruples of conscience awakened by the spite and jealousy of an

adventurer, who, notwithstanding his recently discovered plebeian origin, had dared to raise his eyes to the illustrious scion of a royal race.

The count had no other resource but to enter upon an open struggle with Don Alphonso ; and, as the latter's mysterious life, as well as his equivocal conduct with regard to the Queen, gave so much room for calumny, it was easy for him, if not to persuade Catalina, at least to instil suspicion into her mind against one who had so strongly opposed the attainment of her desires. On the other hand, the innocent girl had never imagined that it was possible to make a formal resistance to the commands of her father, and her filial piety and respect being alarmed, she shut up in her heart the terrible secrets which Ximeno had revealed to her. With a joy, therefore, not free from apprehension, she cast down her eyes, and, in tremulous tones, promised complete submission to her father's orders.

The latter had also to provide a remedy for another evil—the challenge of the Marshal, accepted by Don Alphonso. He knew well that Don Philip of Navarre was too scrupulously honourable not to accept and religiously fulfil the victor's conditions, in case he were overthrown in the contest ; and he knew also, too

well, the valour and dexterity of his adversary, to entertain a doubt of the Marshal's discomfiture. If the combat were to take place, his plans would be completely upset: in spite of the spirit and prowess of his future son-in-law, he would be vanquished by his antagonist, and would accept the conditions of the latter, which would oblige him to renounce for ever the hand of Catalina.

"If he were but a person who would lay him dead upon the field!" thought the count, scratching his ear; "but he will rest satisfied with disarming him, or giving him a scratch, or unhorsing him, and—all is lost.—Not all.—By heaven! the Count de Lerin is not one who will consent so easily to his own ruin. There are still open to me two paths to safety; one of them would be to take care that this Don Alphonso, or Don Ximeno, or Don Devil, should despatch the Marshal; but—but—"

The count paused for a little, playing with this idea in his mind, and then suddenly broke off,—

"No, no; let us resist temptation. Don Alphonso has given proofs that he is as deep as myself, and if he has resolved, as I presume he has, to vanquish the Marshal, merely to impose upon him these conditions, could never drive him from his position, with all the

artillery in my castle ; besides," he added, shrugging his shoulders, and closing almost entirely his small lynx eyes, "it is never too late for certain things. Another path left open to me is to make this duel impossible. 'Don Alphonso is my enemy—I have broken with him ; I must lessen the number of my enemies, which is by no means small, and I may as well begin the processs of subtraction with Don Alphonso.—Well, it is settled ;'" and, after having left Catalina's mind at ease, he sallied forth, rubbing his hands, in search of Don Philip, to whom he had promised to disclose his rival's adventures.

Prompted solely by the scruples of his timid conscience, his pure affection for the Marshal, and well-known zeal for the honour of his name, he detailed to him Ximeno's history, his base origin, his career as a robber, not forgetting to relate how he had been ignominiously expelled from the castle of Orthez. It is scarcely necessary to say that the count did not say a word regarding the papers burnt by the Countess de Foix, and which proved the illustrious birth of the robber chief.

So rigid were the rules of knighthood in regard to descent and quarterings, that Don Philip shuddered at the idea of his measuring arms, unconsciously, with

such a man ; and as peasants were generally regarded as slaves, he intended to treat as such the supposititious Don Alphonso, the infamous Jew who had dared to cast his eyes on Catalina, and aspire to her hand. He set out, therefore, for the Field of Truth, taking with him half-a-dozen knavish and evil-disposed squires, in order to chastise the impostor's insolence, by giving him a severe cudgelling, as he might have done to one of his lowest vassals. But to the half-dozen squires above mentioned, there were added, by the foresight of the count, another half-dozen hardy, desperate, and ruthless ruffians, who received more severe orders than to administer merely a fraternal chastisement, their instructions authorising them to leave him stretched on the field in such a state that he was not likely to get up again.

The Marshal returned to Lerin after his promenade to the Field of Truth, and not very long afterwards arrived the squires who had survived the catastrophe, and who swore solemnly to the count that they had left the challenger as dead, to all intents and purposes, as their comrades in the expedition.

The count's mind being now at ease in that quarter, he proceeded to arrange the contract with the Marshal, who, as usual, behaved in a frank and generous

manner. The count was reasonable ; he was satisfied, for the present, with the twenty castles which he had lost, and which were nearly equivalent to half the kingdom. A very considerable part of the other half belonged to his future son-in-law, so that the count, by this alliance, would become much more powerful than the Queen, and than all his enemies put together, especially as he calculated on the intervention and assistance of his brother-in-law, Ferdinand the Catholic, who was labouring to carry out his design of uniting on his brows the crowns of Arragon, Castille, and Navarre.

The Count de Lerin knew, indeed, that such an alliance could not be permanent. However great might be the Marshal's authority among his partizans, he could never induce certain chiefs to follow his example, and however great might be the love which he professed for Catalina, he would never be able to resist his inveterate habits of hatred, nor the effect of certain revelations which must sooner or later reach his ears ; but if the count took possession of his castles, what mattered it to him if war should again break out, for the hundredth time, in that poor and decrepit monarchy ? Indeed, so much the better for him ; master already of half the kingdom, he would gain a

pretext for conquering the other half, and calling Don Ferdinand to the throne of Navarre.

In that case, he would not be merely the magnate of a small turbulent court whose existence was constantly menaced, but the favourite of a monarch with three crowns, for one of which he would be indebted to him.

The count's plans were laid with consummate skill; but their execution, nevertheless, depended on one circumstance—the connexion with the Marshal: or to reduce the question to more simple terms—it depended on the delivery of the fortresses, particularly those on the frontiers of Castille, as Viana, Lodosa, Cárcar, and Azagra; and more especially the two first, without which it would be difficult for the Castilian troops under Don Juan de Ribera, quartered in Logroño, to penetrate into Navarre, when summoned by the Count de Lerin.

In the contracts, therefore, it was stipulated as an essential condition, that the castles of Viana and Lodosa should be delivered up on the very day of the marriage, which was to take place on the following day, in the most secret manner, so that the news should take all by surprise, after the deed had been already executed.

Scarcely had Don Philip signed the documents

which the count chose to dictate, and scarcely had the latter taken possession of them, when he summoned the officers and cavaliers upon whom he could place the greatest reliance, and instructed them to go and show the contracts to the governors of the towns, and take possession of the Marshal's castles in the most secret manner possible. This bold stroke being once dealt, the count braved the consequences, which were certainly to him not very formidable ; doubtless the bridegroom would take this precipitation greatly amiss, betraying as it did the utmost distrust ; but the consideration which weighed most with his father-in-law was the recovery of his territories, and not the contentment and gratification of a person with whom he could not possibly live long at peace.

On the eve of the marriage, Don Philip went to his castle of Larraga, that which was nearest to Lerin, intending to return early the next morning, to receive the nuptial benediction at the altar, accompanied only by two of his confidential friends.

Notwithstanding all his calmness and coolness—notwithstanding the certainty of his calculations,—the count could not close his eyes that night. Nevertheless, there was nothing that ought to inspire him with suspicion or apprehension. The Marshal was so

transported by the near prospect of his happiness, that he never even dreamt that he might be serving as a tool for the ambitious designs of the count; he left more enamoured than ever, and he was to return within a few hours radiant with love and felicity, tremulous with impatience, longing to give his hand to Catalina, without suspecting that he was heedlessly giving away with it a whole kingdom to the Beamon-tese chief. Even though he should have repented of his first impulse, it could avail nothing; it was now too late; his signature was at the bottom of the contracts by which the transformation of the castles was authorised. Provided with those documents, the count's emissaries went from place to place, claiming the fortresses, and furnishing them with garrisons devoted to his cause. Nevertheless, the count had neither ease of body nor peace of mind. In spite of all his efforts to divert his thoughts, he could not banish the blood-stained image of Don Pedro of Navarre, who rose from his grave, wrapped in his winding sheet, and with his fleshless hand separated the hands of the lovers, as they knelt at the foot of the altar. The assassin, bathed in perspiration, tossed about in his cold bed, and remembered with dread the disappearance of the fatal weapon with which he perpetrated the

crime in the *Tower of Treachery*—a circumstance which he had remarked since the conflagration, without knowing to what cause it could be attributed.

At first he suspected Maese Arnal ; but he felt convinced of his innocence when he paid him a visit in his workshop, and on mentioning the subject, fixed his eyes on the honest countenance of the artificer : the count's eyes were never deceived.

There was also another person in the castle of Lerin who wooed sleep in vain ; her fancy also was haunted by a crowd of images, but they were gay, bright, and placid. Catalina de Beaumont had yielded rather to the irresistible impulses of her heart, and her noble anxiety to soothe the woes of her country, than to the commands and urgent persuasion of the count. Catalina regarded her own happiness and the welfare of her country as cemented that day in lasting union. Catalina, who had listened with wonder and sorrow to the descriptions of the Marshal's warlike exploits, witnessed with unspeakable delight his disinterestedness in peace. The only alarm that agitated her bosom was a certain vague disquietude of modesty ; certain thoughts which passed like glowing clouds across the clear sky of her virgin forehead, wavering fears which were changed into confidence,

and confidence which soon passed into fear; pure dreams which flitted away in a flush of shame, undefined presentiments of an unknown life, and tender adieu to the solitary bed so soon to be deserted; the witness of so many tears, so many sighs, so many pleasing and happy dreams, so many illusions, so many secrets, perhaps of little importance, but which the frankest woman never confides to her best friend.

But all that mystery of regrets which crowd on the heart of a maiden about to lay aside her crown of virgin lilies was suddenly dissipated, to make way for fears of a more definite nature. Catalina recollected the words of Don Alphonso regarding the death of Don Pedro of Navarre, and, however much the Infanzon might be discredited in the mouth of the count, the illustrious descendant of a hundred kings, began to suspect that if Don Alphonso was a plebeian, even plebeians might speak the truth.

She adopted, therefore, a resolution which tranquillized her mind, incapable of disguising its sentiments; she determined to reveal to the Marshal all her suspicions, before passing to the chapel to receive the sacerdotal benediction.

If the Marshal led her to the altar in spite of such revelations, there would be no bounds to Catalina's

happiness. She flattered herself that such would be the result; she doubted anything rather than the Marshal's love. She rose and looked at herself in the mirror to confirm this judgment; but still more attentively than in the Venetian mirror which stood before her, did she look into the mirror of her own heart, and her ingenuous and impassioned heart told her that she might rest in tranquillity.

On her cheek might be noticed a slight paleness, in her eyes a pleasure which was not yet serene, in her bosom a disquietude which arose not from fear, on her lips an occasional sigh, produced rather by longing than regret.

She sat down to her toilet in order to prepare for the nuptials; she was attended by her ladies, who strove to enhance the singular beauty of her countenance; and every word of theirs which she did not comprehend, every noise which reached her ears, sufficed to kindle and agitate her bosom, which throbbed in apprehension of her lover's arrival, at the same time that it glowed with a yearning desire to see him.

The tedious process of arraying her in her bridal dress being completed—a dress white, simple and pure as the ermine,—and dispensing with all other society

but that of her own thoughts, she stood waiting for Philip at her casement, from which could be seen the road to Larraga, and although she was exhausted with fatigue, her impatience would not allow her to remain seated.

Suddenly she heard heavy footsteps, the footsteps of a man, and she trembled with joy and disquietude.

A knocking was heard at her door—she could not find voice to answer. He who knocked entered without waiting an answer. It was her father.

“Well, how active you have been to-day!” said the count to her, with a jovial air.

Catalina could not speak for shame, and cast down her eyes, blushing like the morn whose rosy light bathed her white robes with a soft opal hue. In her confusion she undid with her pearly fingers the golden tresses from the fillet which restrained them.

“How lovely! how innocent!” murmured the count, contemplating her with paternal fondness. “Oh! it is not to be wondered at that the Marshal should have had his head turned.”

“Has he not come?” asked the maiden timidly.

“He will not tarry long; he has to travel two leagues, and the road is bad.”

“No no, I do not say—I am not in haste.”

"I believe you," said the count, with a roguish but good-humoured look, "I believe you. But how is this? Where are your duennas! Alone at such a time!"

"I am better alone—Ah! if my mother were alive!"

"Your poor mother! It is true, you must feel her loss greatly to-day—But if you have lost a mother, you have gained a husband; while I who have lost a wife, lose also a daughter."

"Oh no, father, you lose nothing, although I am to marry; but is it true that I am to be wedded?" asked Catalina, with anxiety.

"I should think you are," said the count, smiling calmly.

"But—the Marshal comes not."

"Others should have come before the Marshal," muttered the count between his teeth, as he left his daughter alone.

The beautiful bride passed some time in this way, the struggle between hope and fear gradually increasing.

The count, with a serious step and severe countenance, entered and left the apartment a hundred times in the course of an hour. He always looked

out at the window ; his eyes were however not directed to the Larraga road, by which the Marshal was to come, but to that which led, in the opposite direction, to Viana and Lodosa. The motionless features of the old man would then contract with certain indications which in any other person would betoken nothing, but in him manifested the utmost uneasiness.

“ Well, sir, they do not come,” he said once, as he left the window.

“ Whom else do you expect ?” asked his daughter.

“ No one but the Marshal.”

“ But you said *they* don’t come.”

“ I meant nothing more nor less than what I said,” replied the count with some harshness, produced by his anxious concern.

“ Ah, my father !” exclaimed Catalina, “ confess that his delay makes you uneasy.”

“ Whose ?”

“ Don Philip’s delay.”

“ Don Philip’s delay”—repeated the count, mechanically as he approached the window with his hand over his eyes to shade them from the sun. “ Not now, not now,” he suddenly added with energy and satisfaction.

“ Have you seen him ?” asked Catalina, hastening

to look out upon the plain. But her countenance fell when she cast her eye along the road to Larraga, and saw it solitary and deserted. At the same time she anxiously observed her father's gestures, and followed with her eyes the direction in which he looked. He was gazing intently on an armed cavalier coming at full speed from Lodosa.

"Who is it? Who is that cavalier? He is in armour, he comes from Lodosa, that cannot be Philip—"

"No, it is not Philip, but it is one who brings me the information that my troops have taken possession of Philip's castles," said Don Luis, hastening to receive the messenger who had been so impatiently expected.

In the meantime the Marshal, whose delay caused Catalina so much uneasiness, felt no less eagerness to fly to her arms.

Without caring to array himself in sumptuous apparel, he hurried forth from the Castle of Larraga just as the sun was appearing in the east. The fresh bloom of his countenance, the cheerfulness of his expression, and his triumphant bearing gave indication of the happiness with which his heart overflowed.

Scarcely had his generous steed descended the

eminence on which the castle stood, when, without any hint from the spurs, he set off at a brisk trot, apparently sympathising with his gallant master, snorting, prancing, shaking his mane, and rearing his tail, displaying all his paces and graces in short, as if he felt conscious of bearing the most handsome cavalier in Navarre to the arms of the most noble and beautiful maiden in the world.

Philip's exhilaration increased with the gay tints of the morning, which bathed with their roseate glow the crests of the mountains, the tops of the trees, and the roofs of the houses.

He was accompanied by two friends ; but perfect happiness is selfish and reserved, and will not risk being disturbed by communication.

Philip instinctively took the lead of his companions ; he did not wish to speak, he could not think, he no longer even felt ; he looked at the changing of the sunlight, and was absorbed in listening to the singing of the birds ; he had a confused remembrance of all the past, and saw also all the future in the same pleasing confusion.

In this frame of mind he had proceeded far into a forest of oaks and pines through which wound the road to Lerin ; and when he reached a crossway, he heard

a voice which resounded hoarsely amidst the trees, and caused him to start involuntarily.

"Halt, good cousin, halt here, if you will please to receive a kinsman's greeting."

It was the voice of Mosen Pierres de Peralta which banished Philip from the paradise of his illusions.

The Marshal became as red as a child surprised in some juvenile delinquency.

"You here, uncle!" he exclaimed in an agitated tone.

"Zounds! how early you get up in these rascally winter mornings!" said he of Peralta, planting himself in the middle of the road; "for my own part I don't feel it, for I am as much tanned and dried as a ham hung up in the smoke; and you with your rosy shepherdess bloom and skin as delicate as a lying-in woman's!"

"Well, I am glad you are so healthy and strong. I am in haste—we shall see one another soon. Adieu—till we meet," said the Marshal, preparing to continue his journyey.

"Where are you going, nephew? where are you going?"

"Your tone, uncle, seems to indicate that this meeting is not accidental. In that case, I may remind

you that I am twenty-five years of age; I have no parents, and need no guardians; I go where I please, and do what I think fit. Adieu; adieu for the second and last time."

" You have no parents, unhappy man!—and what became of your father?"

" These are old stories which I wish to forget."

" Where is your father, I ask you, ill-advised boy?"

" My father is where you shall soon join him, by heaven! if you do not let me proceed."

" Yes; your father is in his grave, and I am come to tell you whose was the treacherous hand that laid him low."

" I have no doubt you would bore me with old wives' stories, if I had patience to listen to them."

" Who the deuce has turned your head in this manner?" asked the old chief, in a tone of insolent wonder.

" Let us understand one another, uncle: I am going to espouse Doña Catalina de Beaumont, in spite of you and all my party; and now, seeing the uselessness of other attempts, you wish to frighten me by the story of my father's death, which you lay to the charge of the count. Is it not so, my worthy uncle? Adieu

then, and spare your inventive powers for the future, for I swear to you, with all due respect to your relationship and your grey hairs, though stained with the bishop's blood; I swear to you that I do not believe a word of what you say, until you bring me proof."

"By the horns of Barrabas!" exclaimed Peralta, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword. But I will not get angry, nephew; I like your language, frank and stern as my own. We are men of Navarre, sound and true, unlike the renegade Count de Lerin, who has more of the Castilian about him than the ducats with which King Ferdinand rewards his treachery. Well then, frankness for frankness, Marshal, for I like not prudery, nor simpering looks, nor honied words, in which poison may be wrapped up: you are going to marry Catalina de Beaumont; very well—I learnt it last night, and without taking a moment's rest, and defying the darkness, the hoar-frost, and the bad road, I am come from Estella, with the sole object of preventing you from getting married, and to put you in mind of the promise which you made three days ago before the Queen."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Philip, bursting into a fit of laughter. "And have you put yourself to so much trouble and inconvenience for this, poor uncle? Fare-

well, farewell, and return to your bed, for sleepless nights are very hurtful at your age."

"What! are you so unnatural, so base and cowardly that you will now, after so many years of fruitless rage, allow the assassin to escape unpunished?"

"But who is it, who is it?"

"It is the Count de Lerin ; and I am glad, because I always told you that the plot of Pampeluna could only have been contrived by him. Ugarra the governor acted in concert with the count ; and Ugarra perished, because traitors must not survive their treachery, and perished with his secret by the count's hand ; and you and your father entered into the tower, leaving your companions outside, because the count wished to divide you ; and the count was there in the tower, and there you were disarmed as had been arranged by the count, and then your defenceless father was treacherously stabbed by the count—"

"Enough, enough, Mosen Pierres ; if what you say were true, I would shed every drop of the count's blood ; but does the point of the assassin's dagger, which I always carry with me, also belong to him, pray? Until you prove that to my satisfaction, good uncle, you talk to no purpose."

"Well, that is precisely what I am come here to prove."

"How?"

"How else could it be than by presenting you with the other half, which I also carry with me?"

"The other half of the poniard?"

"It is a dagger,"

"Let us see it," said the Marshal, undoing his doublet, and drawing forth the point of a weapon, which he kept in a small purse.

His fingers trembled convulsively, so that he could not go through that operation quickly.

"There it is," replied Mosen Pierres, unsheathing a dagger with the blade broken nearly in the middle. "The two pieces ought to fit exactly. You tremble like an aspen, and you will never be able to join them at that rate. Hand them here—look there!"

"There can be no doubt," said the Marshal, pale as a ghost.

"There! how exactly they fit!"

"But I have yet to ascertain to whom this dagger belongs—who had it?"

"But, sblood! have I not told you already?"

"Catalina's father?"

"Precisely"

“And who can assure me of that? who can prove it?” asked Philip, trembling; “for I would still persuade myself that you are accusing him falsely, good uncle.”

“Look at the hilt; do you know these arms?”

“The Count de Lerin’s arms! Give me the dagger, give me the dagger, it belongs to me!”

“I will not give it to you, unless you first swear—”

“Ah! it is many years since I swore it,” said the Marshal, in a hollow tone, and with a fierce smile; “blood for blood, life for life!”

“You are yourself again, nephew, give me your hand.”

“No; my hand is reserved for Catalina.”

“What! you the husband of the count’s daughter!”

“I engaged to kill the assassin, but I also engaged to marry the count’s daughter.”

“And nothing more—nothing more than to wed his daughter?”

“And to deliver up to him this day the castles of Viana and Lodosa.”

“And you are also ready to do that?”

“Sdeath! is it not a promise like the rest?”

“Yes; but it is a foolish promise—a promise which

opens the gates of the kingdom to the Castillians ;—a promise which exalts the count above you."

" Ah !" replied Don Philip, with a fierce smile, " don't imagine that the count will long enjoy the possessions which I shall cede to him.—Adieu, uncle, tell these cavaliers to quicken their pace."

And spurring his horse, he pursued his way to Lerin."

Mosen Pierres allowed the Marshal's friends to pass, repeating to them the order to overtake him immediately ; and when all had disappeared, he drew forth a whistle, with which he made a signal, and saw himself quickly surrounded with horsemen in complete armour.

" Sancho de Londoño," cried he of Peralta, " to Viana, to Viana, without losing a moment, and tell the governor not to deliver up the castle, even though he should receive written orders from the Marshal to that effect. Beltran de Armendariz, to Lodosa, for the same purpose. You others, go to Mendavia, Cárcar and Azagra. I will remain here with six squires, and keep watch in the neighbourhood of Lerin."

" And the Marshal ; the Marshal ?" asked they all.

" The Marshal is now at one with us, and when we

meet again each of you will present his castle saved,
and he will present to you the Count de Lerin's
head."

And like the fragments scattered by an exploding
bomb-shell, the cavaliers separated, and flew off in
different directions.

CHAPTER II.

AN hour after the fatal meeting described in the last chapter, and two hours after daybreak, there entered into the workshop of the armourer, Maese Arnal, a cavalier muffled up to the eyes, and who showed by the mud on his boots that he had come a considerable distance on foot, and by a bad road, although his gilt spurs, which were stained with blood, also clearly indicated that he had recently dismounted.

The Tolosan artificer, who wandered about from castle to castle, reaping his harvest amidst the incessant wars in Navarre, had a few days previously fixed his abode at Lerin, in order to serve his excellent customer the count, whose armoury he had undertaken to clean and repair in a short time. He was hard at work then, assisted by his men, when his labours were interrupted by the cavalier's unexpected visit.

The stranger called him aside, and said to him

with much mystery, in an under tone, "Maese Arnal, I bring you a job which you must execute for me immediately."

"Unless it is one which occupy very little time, it will be impossible for me to serve you."

"It is a dagger, whose blade has been broken in two."

"Broken in two! the only thing that can be done is to fit it with a new blade."

"No, no," said the muffled stranger abruptly. "It is absolutely necessary that the blade should be soldered: I will not have it done in any other way."

"That is a mere caprice, for of what use can a soldering of this kind be to you? At the second blow—"

"One will be quite enough."

"Very well: but whether it will be enough or not, the operation, in whatever way it is done, by giving it a new blade, as I think necessary, or—"

"Maese Arnal, it must be quite the same."

"Only soldering it is not the work of a moment; and I am excessively busy with the armoury of the count, which I must have ready within a few days, and—in short, I cannot possibly serve you."

"By heaven! I will not admit of any impossibility,"

answered the cavalier in a determined tone. "How much do you expect to gain by the repairs you are doing for the count?"

"The whole will not cost him less than twenty florins, for — cast your eyes over those battered corslets, these cloven helmets, these dinted broad-swords—"

"Well, for the speedy and immediate repair of this dagger I give you forty florins."

"Holy Virgin!"

"You are surprised? Here Maese Arnal, take this diamond by way of earnest, and you shall this very moment set to work. I will not leave you till it is finished."

"Holy Virgin!" repeated Maese Arnal, in astonishment; "I confess, sir, that this liberality, this generosity amazes, confounds me: and where is the weapon?"

"Here it is," said the cavalier, producing the broken dagger from beneath his cloak.

The armourer turned pale, and refused to take it in his hands; he also wished to give back the diamond, as if he were not much satisfied with his acquisition.

"What is the matter with you?"

“That dagger, sir,—” said the artificer, trembling.

“What? What terror does that dagger strike into you?” asked the stranger abruptly and anxiously.

“Do you know it, pray?”

Maese Arnal looked all round suspiciously, but did not dare to look the cavalier full in the face.

“That dagger, sir! A plague on my ill luck; some malicious witch must have brought you here.”

“Why? What is the matter?”

“Nothing! if I were an unscrupulous knave, and wished to butter my bread on both sides, as the saying is, it would matter nothing, for I would take your diamond, and then take the count’s—”

“The count’s? The Count de Lerin?”

“Oh! now I have let it out, sir: I am an honest man, and ask your pardon if—”

“Not only forty florins, I will give you eighty,—I will give you all I have,—I will give you as much as you ask, if you explain to me clearly the meaning of your words.”

“Yours, sir, make me tremble; for to talk of such things with a stranger, and at the same time with so generous a person.”

“I am not unknown to you, Maese Arnal, for you

have occasionally visited my castles, and—come here, come away further from your people : do you know me now," said the cavalier, cautiously uncovering his countenance.

"Don Philip of Navarre?"

"Hush! Maese, hush! Now tell me all that you know about the weapon I have brought you ; mind that my life, nay more than my life depends on it."

"I can tell you nothing more than that the Count de Lerin came one day to my house and charged me, with much mystery, to ascertain what had become of a certain broken dagger, which had been stolen from him on the day of the conflagration ; and that if any one came to my workshop with it, I should detain him, and give the count intimation secretly—"

"So it is certain."

"What certain? What I say certain?" asked the honest artificer, almost offended at the doubt.

"No; I ask if it is certain that this dagger belonged to the Count de Lerin?"

"It left my shop, at Tolosa, some years ago ; here is my mark ; I sold it to the count, and I never saw it again until I very recently observed it lying broken in his armoury. I took it among other articles to be repaired ; but the count made such a wry face when I

showed it to him, that I had to put it back timidly in its place. The Penitent of Rocomador had charged me to give her notice if a dagger of this description should come into my hands, and I went the same day to apprise the servant of God, who, doubtless, obtained it miraculously from the armoury."

"Quick, quick, Maese! Begin the work. You do not know how urgently it is needed."

The artificer took the two pieces, and began the process of soldering.

Don Philip remained in a dark corner, not far from the furnace where the gold was smelting, with which the armourer intended to join the pieces, in order to make them adhere more firmly. The countenance of the Marshal, half concealed by his cloak, and illuminated by the ruddy and sometimes bright reflection of the furnace, had something diabolical in its expression; his eyes, burning with rage and revenge, sparkled still more fiercely than the glowing embers.

In about an hour the work was completely finished.

The artificer delivered the weapon to the Marshal.

"Take care, sir, that it does not strike upon a bone when it enters."

"Don't be afraid, the blow will go straight to the heart."

"I have whetted it so that it itches to pierce."

"Oh! you speak truly," replied Philip, "it itches to pierce. Now, Maese, the diamond is yours: you may depend on a greater recompense when I see you more at leisure; and, above all things, observe the most profound secrecy regarding this visit."

And, uttering these words, he departed, carefully muffled, and descended the hill.

The artificer followed him with his eyes until he saw him disappear in the forest of Baigorri, and said to himself:—"I thought the object of his vengeance was not so far off."

The hour of noon was past before the Marshal made his appearance in the castle of Lerin.

Tears flowed copiously down Catalina's slightly pallid cheeks, and glistened on her rich nuptial dress; messengers came and went, and their words instead of soothing increased her grief. There was no one who said to her—"I have seen Don Philip;" there was not one who did not return with an ominous look and melancholy countenance. All that could be gathered amounted to this;—that the Marshal had left Larraga early in the morning, and set out on the road to Lerin; but what had occurred to him in that short space?

More dejected than afraid, despairing of her happiness, she seemed to have exhausted the fountain of her tears, and was thinking of resigning herself to the ruin of her ill-founded hopes, when suddenly the door of her solitary apartment was thrown open, to admit her gallant lover.

His first words, his transports of affection, of passion, more eager and ardent than ever, were sufficient to banish every vestige of suspicion, and to assuage all her sorrows; but when the unexpected joy of seeing him again gave place to reflection, Catalina fixed her enamoured gaze sadly on Don Philip's countenance, which was overspread with a deadly pallor, and distorted by inward struggles.

"What ails you, Marshal?" asked the bride, "your face which is always ruddy is now pale; your features, generally calm, are haggard and agitated. What has happened to you! Whence this delay? Where have you been?

"Be not concerned, Catalina, it is nothing—merely the excitement of travelling—I came in such haste."

"Such haste! I have been expecting you for an age. Do you know what is the hour?"

"Yes, I know it; and my anxiety to be here, regret that you should be kept waiting, and—you had,

perhaps, doubts of me, for two or three hours' absence!"

The fair bride cast down her eyes, which were still red, under the weight of this rebuke; she could not lie, she could not dissemble.

"Ah! so you doubted my love? you do not know me, Catalina. I love you now more than ever. The more numerous the obstacles that rise up to oppose our love, the more it kindles and increases."

"Obstacles!" replied the maiden, half satisfied and half alarmed; "what obstacles oppose our happiness when—now that the moment approaches when it is to be crowned?" she added timidly.

"None that I cannot overcome and surmount, Catalina! Is it not true that you are going to be made mine for ever, and that neither heaven nor earth will then be able to separate our souls, to disunite our hearts? For ever yours—for ever mine."

"For ever; for ever," repeated Catalina with melodious accent, and fascinated eyes.

"Well then, hang it!" said Philip resuming his habitual tone. "Away with your fancies!—and happen what may, Catalina, we must always love one another, and never, never shall we cease to be all in all to one another."

“ Happen what may ?” asked the girl with a look of fear.

“ Yes ; what need we concern ourselves about the whole world ?”

“ What do you mean by that ? What do you fear ?”

“ I fear nothing so long as I hold you in my arms,” exclaimed Philip with enthusiasm. “ Ah ! my simple child ! I love you, I adore you blindly; madly!— I cannot live without you : Oh ! now less than ever— Do you hear me Catalina ? without you it is impossible for me to live.”

“ Yes, I hear it, Marshal ; but, by some contradiction of mind which I cannot account for, your ardent protestations, your transports of passion, far from satisfying and tranquillizing, alarm me—alarm me, Philip, and make me tremble— ”

“ Tremble ! Why ?”

“ You say that you can now less than ever live without me. Well then, what has happened since yesterday ?”

“ Zounds ! what can have happened ? poor fawn of the mountains, frightened at the slightest noise from a waving branch, at the fluttering of a bird ! What has happened ? nothing ; nothing that can make me re-

nounce your love, your heart, the delight of living in your arms—nothing.”

And as he said *nothing* his eyes flashed hatred and revenge, and his look was gloomy and fierce.

Catalina was by no means tranquillized ; so much perseverance, so much obstinacy in questioning him, was the secret voice of her presentiments, which made her look with distrust on her lover’s protestations of love, and with dread on his very impatience.

“ Philip, Philip,” she said, after a short silence, “ sit down ; I am going to tell you something which will no doubt be disagreeable to you, but—”

“ Oh ! Catalina, are they not waiting for us at the foot of the altar ? Why defer our happiness a single moment ? After you are mine we shall be able to speak with more confidence—”

“ No ; what I am going to tell you I can only reveal before we are united, in order that we may then forget it for ever.”

“ Well, then, I listen to you, but I shall not be seated ; be brief.”

“ After you were delivered from captivity in this castle, and went about in search of your father’s assassin, brandishing the sword which has overthrown so

many, and thirsting for blood, what have you learned regarding that disastrous night at Pampeluna?"

It is impossible to describe the impression which these words produced on the Marshal.

"Catalina! Catalina!" he exclaimed in a tone of extreme irritation, "why do you ask that, unhappy maiden?"

"I knew too well that that question must raise a tempest in your breast. Philip you have harboured suspicions against my father, is it not so?"

"Yes, yes," answered her lover, scarcely knowing what he said; "I have harboured suspicions which now—" Philip paused.

"Time, however, dispelled them; but let us suppose that they were this day renewed—"

"Good God! Do you know—?"

"Oh! my heart forebodes all; these suspicions have been now revived; I know not how; I know not whether they are just or unjust, for, Marshal, the Supreme Judge alone is certain of not erring in his decisions; appearances often mislead the most sagacious and upright of men; but one thing certain is that your doubts have been renewed—your agitation betrays them. Oh! if I have for a moment mistrusted your love, you also—you also have struggled with

revenge which bade you flee from me ; but at last you are come, and—tell me, Philip, tell me in sincerity, that you love me, whether my father be guilty or not. Will you give me your hand with all the confidence, the love, the fidelity with which I give you mine ?”

“ Love you ! Yes I love you, life of my life ! Do you not see me before you consumed with love ? Do you not see me at your feet, beseeching you, in exchange for my existence, not to delay my felicity a moment longer ?”

“ Mine is now complete from this hour ! Philip, my husband, not a shadow dims it.—Oh ! come to my arms,” exclaimed Catalina, unable to restrain the gush of affection with which her tender heart overflowed.

Philip strained his bride to his bosom for an instant ; it was a virgin’s first embrace—a lover’s first favour, pure as the breath of morn ; it was a spiritual delight, unutterable bliss ; a gush of chastest ardour which purified his heart, sweeping away from it the black, chilling mists of revenge.

The Marshal fell at the feet of his bride, tremulous with love, and shocked at the same time at the horrible projects which he had meditated ; he fell confounded before that angel of candour and virtue, penetrating with a glance into Catalina’s benevolent heart, and

then looking again into his own. In the one he saw perfect delicacy, unsullied fidelity and truth; in the other deceit, double dealing, and a horrible mixture of love and revenge, for Philip carried with him the fatal dagger which had pierced his father's vitals. He intended, after receiving the nuptial benediction, to fly from the castle with his bride, but not before he had wreaked his vengeance on the count; to favour his flight he had twelve horsemen stationed in the neighbouring forest of Baigorri. He thought he could separate the daughter's cause from that of the father; it was his design to raise the cry of war, the poniard still reeking with the assassin's blood,—and in the bewilderment of his passions he had fancied his conduct to be just and natural, but when seen by the light reflected from Catalina's noble and virtuous heart, it now appeared to him hateful, treacherous, and above all fatal to the happiness of his bride.

“Catalina, Catalina! I also shall be frank,”—he exclaimed; “I wish also to be worthy of you.”

And as he uttered these words, which were about to usher in the ingenuous confession of his faults, footsteps were heard in the adjoining apartment; and the maiden, ashamed of her manifestations of love, released herself from the Marshal's arms and fled to her toilet,

with the pretext of preparing herself for the ceremony, but in reality to hide herself from the eyes of a stranger, and if possible from those of her own conscience.

There was a terrible revulsion in Philip's heart when he saw his father's assassin enter the chamber.

The count wore a smiling countenance, a calm demeanour, a serene and placid look. In honour of the occasion he wore a long scarlet tunic and the mantle and insignia of the *Greyhound*; a velvet cap with a band of brilliants covered his snowy hair; his dress indicated that he was already prepared to accompany his daughter to the solemn ceremony.

The Marshal did not wish to address a single word to him, dreading lest his quivering accent might betray the rage which made his heart throb so violently; neither did the count open his lips; he contented himself with darting at him a rapid, instantaneous, but profound side glance which sufficed to make him aware of the state of Philip's mind, while he did not omit at the same time to notice the dagger he wore at his side; he then approached the window, and casting his eyes over the country without fixing them on any object, he said with the greatest indifference, and without even turning his face or leaving the spot. "The Deuce! the roads are not yet dried since the melting of snow."

The Marshal had nothing to object to so important and serious an observation.

It was the first time that the two ill-reconciled enemies had met since they parted the day before. After the anxiety the Marshal's absence had caused his daughter, he did not indulge in a single syllable of friendly rebuke, he did not give even a look of surprise, or a smile of satisfaction. This was much for generosity, but little for resentment.

Don Luis proceeded in the same cold and composed tone:

"What a state you must be in with these muddy roads!"

He then turned round with his back to the light, his arm resting on the window sill. The Marshal had made amends for his carelessness by covering the dagger with the skirt of his mantle.

"Indeed," added the count, "your boots are quite soiled, and I also see that your mantle is bespattered. Will you take it off?"

"I am very well as I am," said the Marshal at length, concealing the dagger more carefully.

"The messengers from Viana and Lodosa came pretty much in the same plight as yourself; they tell me there are places which are quite impassable, and

that of course the citadels of those towns are now in my possession, according to agreement. What a pity that we should have no other causeway in Navarre, but that from France to Santiago in Gallicia!"

"Ha! so then the castles of Viana and Lodosa are already in your possession. I see you have been up very early, count," replied the Marshal, endeavouring to conceal his irritation as much as possible.

"That was covenanted, if my memory serves me right," said the count, with the greatest indifference. "I think that these two castles were to be delivered up to me on the day of marriage."

"But the marriage has not yet taken place."

"The fault is certainly not mine. Confound these detestable roads."

The Marshal was already beginning to get nettled at the count's jocular, and even provoking manner; and he played beneath his coat with the hilt of the recently repaired dagger. But the aged chief of Beaumont regarded him with a forced smile, which seemed to intimate that none of his movements escaped his penetration; and with a view of exhausting his patience he pursued—

"Ha! I forgot to tell you, Don Philip, that my

people—I have just received notice—have also taken possession of the towns of Cárcar and Losarcos.”

“ By heavens ! Señor Count, if my memory does not deceive me, the contracts do not say that these towns are to be transferred to you precisely on the day of the marriage : and if I am not mistaken, the mere fact of this day being mentioned for the first two, shows that the others were to be excluded.”

“ I am very sorry, Marshal,” replied Don Luis, with an accent and expression of feigned regret, “ that my people were so stupid as to misinterpret the terms of our agreement. Who ever saw such stupidity ? But I excuse them in some measure. The roads are—”

“ The devil take you and the roads !” muttered Philip.

“ The roads are impassable,” repeated the count, with affected warmth, “ and it is certainly not very pleasant to be wandering about every day in the mire. In going to Viana my people had to pass through Losarcos, and Cárcar is but a step from Lodosa. In fact, what I wonder at is, that since they had begun taking possession, and changing garrisons in such a rapid and summary way, they did not go on and do

the same with the town of Mendavia, which is between Viana and Lodoso, with Allo, Arroniz, and Dicastillo—”

“ Señor Count !” exclaimed the Marshal, in wrath. The old man looked at him askance, and endeavoured to repress a smile of triumph, which was nearly betraying him.

“ Nothing but the stupidity of my people. I cannot get over the vexation I feel, that all these towns have by this time been restored to my possession.”

“ By heaven, Señor Constable ! such a proof of mistrust, such an offence—”

“ Doubtless you feel it severely,” said the count, interrupting him, “ and you may naturally throw the blame on me ; but how could I have supposed that my messengers would be so stupid or so diligent as to accomplish in one day a task which would require whole weeks ? For, do not doubt it, Señor Marshal, I will conceal nothing from you. Those people seem to have undertaken to recover my towns and fortresses in the shortest time possible ; and devil take me if I do not think they will have got them all back within twenty-four hours.”

“ What ! so you have taken already all that you

had to receive, before I am united to Catalina in perpetual bonds, before you have given your daughter away to me?"

"Well, but you have only to stretch forth your hand, and Catalina is yours."

"And if I did not stretch forth my hand to grasp that of Catalina, and if justly enraged at such perfidy—"

"Then," said the Count, interrupting him, "in that case I should have lost nothing."

The Marshal bit his lip, his eyes glared and rolled with the fury of revenge, and he half unsheathed his sword. But it suddenly occurred to him that the count's insolence could only have for its object to exasperate him and frustrate his plans before the marriage; making an effort, therefore, to restrain himself, he said—

"Very well, count, my wish is that the ceremony be not delayed a moment longer. Besides, you are quite right. I faith I have no reason to be angry. The castles were to be yours at any rate, and it does not matter whether you get them to-day or to-morrow. Is it not so? What concerns me most is Catalina's happiness and my own."

This change of tone was not very flattering to the count, as it showed that he had been understood.

Nevertheless, not the slightest contraction of his brows could be detected, nor any alteration whatever in the expression of his eyes.

"Well, well," he exclaimed, with a sudden joyfulness of manner, "I again see you as you are,—generous, disinterested, occupied solely with my daughter's happiness. What does it matter after all, whether the castles are garrisoned with Beamontese or Agramontese, since we are all Navarrese now? Philip, the moment now approaches when you are to be my son, do you hear? my son," repeated the count, with a deep emphasis, "then why do you not open your affectionate arms to your father?"

The Marshal, pale with rage, answered falteringly, "My father! my father! good God!"

"You have lived long enough as an orphan; for it is now eight years since you lost your father, poor Don Pedro, whom I respected for his bravery, and loved as a kinsman. My most anxious wish is to fill the place he held in your heart."

"Enough, enough!" exclaimed the youth, trembling from head to foot.

"Call me father, Philip; permit me to clasp you in my arms as a beloved son—"

"In your arms! in your arms, which treacherously

enclasped my father," said the Marshal, at length giving vent to the rage by which he was almost choked.

"What say you, my son?"

"Oh! you wished it, count, you wished to exasperate me. Have you not been irritating, provoking, goading me on? Well, you have got what you wanted; but I vow to Almighty God that you will rue it dearly. I care not a jot for the castles—for all that I possess—for I can do without them; but I swear that you, Señor Count, shall never have the benefit of a single battlement."

And the Marshal's rage was so violent as he uttered these words that his voice, which was so hoarse as to be scarcely intelligible, at last failed him altogether, and, with his flashing eyes, his livid countenance, and foaming lips, he looked like a tiger goaded to madness in his cage.

The count remained motionless; the fabric of his aggrandizement, so carefully planned and reared, threatened to fall in ruins, but he did not even wince or change colour.

"I had been told, indeed," he said, availing himself of that pause, "that your temper was quick and irascible, but I never fancied you were so violent."

"Yes, you assume, count," pursued the Marshal, in a state of great excitement, "you assume a tranquillity which you do not feel ; it can now avail you nothing. Throw off your mask, for I know you now. The hour is come, Señor Count, the hour of vengeance is arrived."

"Ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed the count, with a laugh which meant, "You tell me nothing new. When one has a head to forge such plans one must tear out one's own heart, poor Don Philip."

"You laugh, yes, you laugh ; if you think I am not yet blind and dull enough, insult me, hurl me into destruction, but we must fall together ; and all your cunning, your daring, your confidence, cannot prevent you from rolling with me into the abyss."

"But are you mad, Marshal?" asked the count, with a sort of calm surprise. "Of what do you accuse me?"

The Marshal looked around with disquietude ; he then locked the doors of the apartment, and, throwing back the skirts of his coat, he turned to the count and said to him, in a deep tone—

"Do you know this dagger?"

"I have observed for some time that you had it."

"Was it always yours?"

“ Always.”

“ Well, then, this dagger was worn by a cavalier on the night at Pampeluna, and as you have acknowledged that it belonged to no other than you, you are that cavalier.”

“ You cannot prove that.”

“ Oh, count! you are very unmindful of heaven when you thus defy eternal justice, when you live in such perfect security that the darkness which veils hidden crimes can never be penetrated. A dastard cavalier, armed with this dagger, sought out Don Pedro, who was already disarmed, in the darkness of night, and in the confined limits of a tower; with the arms which you offered to open to me he clasped him like a venomous serpent; with this dagger which you admit to be, and to have always been yours, he stabbed my father to the heart; with this dagger the traitor fell on the ground, and the force with which the weapon came against the pavement caused the blade to break in two pieces, one of which was kept by you, detestable villain, and the other by Don Pedro’s son. I, Señor Count, I kept it in the hope that God would avail himself of this means of detecting the assassin. I kept the point, just broken off and still reeking with my father’s blood. I carried it ever

since close to my heart, that my revenge might never cool ; and God—God who will not allow crime to remain always unpunished—has placed the other half in my hands, and, do you see it ? do you see it ?” cried the Marshal, unsheathing the fatal steel, and brandishing it as the angel waved the fiery sword that guards the gates of paradise. “ Do you know it ? it is the same which pierced my father’s quivering vitals.”

“ The same ; and what then ?” answered the count, calmly and boldly.

“ What !” echoed the Marshal, in a frenzy at hearing such a provocation. “ Why if this blade pierced my father’s heart, its office now must be to transfix yours.”

And the fatal dagger descended like a thunderbolt upon the old man’s breast.

The weapon broke at the juncture, and the point rebounded, quivering ,without having penetrated a hair-breadth.

Beneath his silken robes, the Count, admonished of what might happen, wore a fine and flexible coat of mail, with which he might have defied the point of the best tempered and most adamantine steel.

Don Philip stood petrified and disarmed, the broken weapon in his hand.

There was a moment of painful silence. Two quick and gentle raps given by a delicate hand, were heard at the door, through which Catalina had disappeared.

"Do you hear?" said the count, as if nothing had taken place; "it is my daughter, my poor daughter, who comes prepared for the ceremony. Sheath that dagger—be calm, and come along."

The Marshal raised his eyes, looked fixedly at him with amazement, and said, confused and agitated:

"Heavens! to the altar now!"

"Yes now, better now than before; I slew your father, and you saved my daughter; now you attempt to assassinate me, and nevertheless I give you the daughter you saved; we are quits."

And as the Count de Lerin spoke thus, he opened the door to his daughter, who entered, her heart bounding with joy: she was dressed in white gauze, and looked like Venus as she rose from the foam of the sea.

CHAPTER III.

ON the eve of the day when the events we have just related took place, a woman covered with a long veil, stood motionless, leaning on a rude and simple stone cross before the chapel of Rocamador. The breeze from the Pyrenees was sweeping away the fleecy clouds from that magnificent carpet which is trod only by immortal footsteps; and the diamonds with which it is studded, exhibited their living, twinkling splendours, enhanced by the transparency of the atmosphere, from which the invisible vapours of the evening were detached in the form of hoar frost.

Apparently as insensible as the granite which served her as a support, the solitary woman did not attempt to defend herself from the cold by the slightest movement; and this absence of motion caused still more surprise when the wind agitated the folds of her black tunic, exposing her feet, which were white as marble,

and on which she wore small sandals, scarcely sufficient to cover them.

After waiting for some time, there were heard heavy footsteps, and a man muffled to the eyes made his appearance ; he approached the cross, muttering between his teeth, and placing his right foot on the step which served as a foundation to it, drew forth his hand to cross himself, and raise the brim of his hat; both of which operations he performed in the briefest manner possible.

“ Good night,” said the new comer.

“ Heaven keep you, Mosen Pierres,” answered Ines, without changing her posture.

“ Devil take— ! pardon me, Señora, but it is so infernally cold that one cannot help swearing ; when I am in your presence I try to restrain myself; however the cursed hoar frost—. But what has occurred that you should send for me at such an hour ?”

“ Many things of which you are doubtless ignorant, since you live so unconcerned.”

“ Is it some mischievous trick that the old fox of Lerin has played us in return for my harmless prank in setting fire to his castle ? But before going any further, we must stop a little and discuss that matter. Although I am, as the monks tell me, excommunicated, I

perform works of Christian duty as well as any one can. Among others, I give you alms without stint, in order that you may distribute them at your pleasure, and I also come to consult you in all important affairs. Now by my soul, I have to demand what account you can give me, of the confidence I reposed in you regarding the burning of the castle of Lerin; for I strongly suspect it was you that warned the Marshal, who has ever since played the very devil with my plans."

"Mosen Pierres, you ought to have known long ago that I give no countenance to crimes."

"Hang it! I wish some reverend abbot would extricate me from all doubt as to whether anything can be called a crime which tends to the extermination of one's enemies, more especially when they are also the enemies of one's king and country. As to myself, Señora, I have no scruples on the subject; although it is true I enjoy the reputation of having rather a roomy conscience."

"We have not," said the Penitent, "much time to waste on such matters; know, that if you don't use all diligence, your party will, within a few hours, receive a death-blow; know, that perhaps this very night, or to-morrow at latest, your nephew, Don Philip, weds the count's daughter."

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Peralta, with a movement of surprise; “I had indeed some suspicion of my nephew’s mental derangement, but, hang me, if I ever expected to see him so stark mad.”

“Well, then, now you know it, and it is your business to prevent it.”

“Prevent it! That is more easily said than done, with so obstinate a mule as my nephew. I vow I know not what else I can do than to call to arms, and fall with all our force upon the castle, burning it with the father, daughter, son-in-law, and the devil to boot, who is heartily welcome to the whole lot of them.”

“Poor Mosen Pierres!” said Ines, in a tone of compassion, which deeply wounded the self-love of the Agramontese chief. “Instead of attacking, you must think of defending yourself; for the Count de Lerin has not, doubtless, consented to the match merely to gratify the Marshal; the one delivers up his daughter, and the other his territories. Poor Mosen Pierres! perhaps at this moment you are numbered among the Count de Lerin’s vassals.”

“By the blessed Saint Fermin, Saint Sol, and Saint Saturnino, and all the Saints of Navarre, whether male or female, if any other tongue had uttered such blas-

phemy, I would have torn it out. Adieu, Señora, adieu, and thanks for the information."

"Where are you going?"

"I know not—I will do something desperate—I will turn half the world upside down; I know not what I shall do, but I swear that the marriage shall not take place."

"Come here, Mosen Pierres, do you know the history of the surprise of Pampeluna?"

"And what the deuce does it matter whether I know it, if there is no means of convincing the Marshal of what occurred there?"

"There," answered the Penitent, producing the Count de Lerin's dagger from beneath her cloak, "there is an argument which the son of Don Pedro will never be able to resist."

"What is this?"

"It is the weapon with which Don Luis de Beaumont assassinated Philip's father at Pampeluna. Take it; the portion which is wanting is in the possession of the Marshal, who always carries it about with him."

And leaving the dagger in the hands of the amazed and grateful Pierres, the Penitent entered the chapel of our Lady.

In the meantime Ximeno's delirium had ended in a deep and tranquil sleep, which recruited his strength, and restored his wonted vigour of mind. Chafarote, more prudent than the Penitent, allowed the patient to say whatever he liked, without annoying him by useless interruptions and questions. He followed the medical system of allowing nature to take its course ; that is, to do nothing, which is the best thing, generally speaking, that doctors can do. When he saw him oppressed with sleep, he also stretched himself at the foot of the bed, and immediately began to snore, fancying that he was in the well-known forest of the Bárdenas, beside his valiant captain.

They were awakened by the first rays of the sun. Ximeno sat up in bed, with a confused recollection of all that had passed ; but the presence of his old squire, and the aspect of those bare and sombre walls, gradually dispelled the mists that clouded his mind, which was again invaded by disquietude, sadness, and dejection. He then felt his body all over to ascertain whether all was right, and when he came upon a swelling under his doublet, he smiled bitterly.

What tormented him most, and made his blood boil, was to see himself stretched on a bed of suffering when

he most needed to be up and doing, in order to defeat the designs of his enemies, and carry out the plans which he had so long and so deeply meditated.

In one of his transports he leaped out of bed, fancying that the fervour of his spirit would give strength to his body, and that he should be able to escape from that lonely abode, the narrow prison of his daring schemes.

He rose in fact, but, convinced immediately of his weakness, he had to be supported in the arms of his squire, with whose aid he was enabled to move a few steps, and go out under the porch to indulge his longing for light, free air, wider space, and a more extended horizon.

Estella presented itself to his eyes, with its castle, ramparts, and towers, and feathery smoke floating over the roofs. In the highest part of the southern skirt of the hill, rose proudly the royal castle where the Queen resided. She was there, perhaps at that moment receiving the Count de Lerin or the Marshal, on whose lips hung the secret of Ximeno's history. Oh, how he wished that he could fly to the side of Leonora to prevent the discovery of a mystery on which all his projects were founded !

But at another place also, at Lerin, his presence was

equally indispensable. Catalina had, perhaps, received the nuptial benediction, and the count, the author of Ximeno's last misfortunes, was probably rejoicing in his work, while he, prostrate on his sick-bed, was utterly incapable of taking his revenge for the ignominious treatment he had received—while he, confined to that lonely cell, was condemned almost to witness his own ruin, without the power to stretch forth his hand to avert it. And the Penitent, Ines, his protector, had she also abandoned him ?

But towards nightfall Ines arrived, just when Ximeno was beginning to lose his trust in her who had been always his shield.

“ Ximeno ! ” she exclaimed, on entering, with infinite satisfaction, inspired by the visible improvement in his health.

“ Oh ! is it you, Ines ? ” said the latter, with an indefinable sentiment of gratitude, wonder, interest, and pain. “ I thought you had forsaken me.”

The Penitent returned more pale and emaciated than usual ; her prostration was such that she sank exhausted with fatigue on one of the stone benches at the door of the hermitage.

Ximeno drew a bad augury from her state and appearance.

"Ines," he said, "what is the matter? What bad news have you brought?"

"Bad news!" exclaimed the Penitent, in a feeble tone, which, however, betrayed deep tenderness. "Ines would not have returned to the hermitage to bring you more disasters."

The sick man, in his impatience, attempted to rise from his seat and approach his protectress, but he had only strength enough to get upon his feet, supported by the wall; Ines, however, with an agility scarcely credible in her enfeebled condition, rushed to his side.

"Oh! what tidings do you bring? What have you to tell me?" he exclaimed, with emotion. "What comfort have you in store for a heart to which joy is a stranger?"

"Be calm, Ximeno, I shall tell you at leisure. I have travelled much—for several days I have neither slept nor eaten—"

"For me?"

"What is there to marvel at in that? For fifteen years I have lived only for you."

"Oh! Ines," ejaculated Ximeno, whose heart smote him; but he then added, "And what have you succeeded in doing?"

“ All that you desire.”

“ Is it possible? So then while I was asleep—while I was restoring my energies in your hut—you have accomplished—?”

“ As much as you could have done yourself.”

“ As much?”

“ Yes; in the first place, you would at all hazards have prevented Catalina and Philip from receiving the nuptial blessing; is it not so?”

“ Yes, yes; that is the main thing,” answered the Infanzon, in a tone which pierced poor Ines’s heart.

“ Well, then, Catalina is not married, and will never marry the Marshal. Ximeno, Ximeno! are you content?”

“ Oh! is it possible?” exclaimed the cavalier, with unfeigned joy. “ Can I credit your words?”

“ Alas! they could not proceed from lips less deserving suspicion than mine,” said the hapless maiden of Eguarás.

“ Let me kiss the soles of your feet—Ines, my guardian angel!”

“ Sit down, Ximeno; you cannot remain standing.”

“ When I was plunged in affliction and despair, you defeated the count’s schemes by merely taking a single step!—But what have you done? What has

occurred? Is it indeed true, that God has conferred on you the power of working miracles?"

"A few days ago a man came here who wished, as many others do, to consult me about his affairs. I was not in the hermitage, most fortunately both for him and me; for since you crossed this threshold I resolved not to open my door to any man. He went down to the chapel of our Lady, and there he found me. He is an honest artificer from Tolosa, who has for many years repaired the armour of the principal cavaliers in Navarre.—"

"Maese Arnal?"

"Maese Arnal it was; he had received in my hermitage at various times counsels which he found salutary, and for which he felt very grateful; I had charged him to give me information respecting a weapon with a broken blade—"

"Ah! did you know?—"

"Yes; after Don Philip of Navarre was released from captivity in the castle of Lerin, he came to see me, and begged me to discover what had become of a poniard or dagger, the point of which he still preserved, stained with his father's blood; desiring, then, to prevent the fatal consequences of such a discovery, I spoke to the armourer, into whose hands I naturally

supposed that the dagger would fall, if he to whom it belonged should think of repairing it. But this did not take place, its owner, doubtless to prevent the discovery of his secret, preferred keeping it broken, useless and concealed in his armoury, until the same Maese Arnal saw it accidentally in the castle of Lerin, and came immediately to apprise me of his discovery. I charged him to observe the strictest secrecy ; the artificer departed; and I gave orders at the same time to Chafarote, to seize an opportunity, as soon as possible, of obtaining, either directly or by means of other persons on whom he could rely, possession of the weapon, as, according to my calculations, it might prove useful for the furtherance of our plans. This opportunity presented itself when the conflagration broke out in the palace of Lerin. Last night, in your delirium, you clearly indicated what was your desire, as to the use that might be made of the dagger—I had it already in my possession—and now—”

“ What ? proceed !”

“ Now it is in the Marshal’s hands.”

“ Ah ! so you have not only broken off the marriage, but have also avenged me, Ines ? Is it not so ?”

“ Avenged you ?”

“ Yes ; the Count de Lerin, the infamous author of my greatest humiliation, he who in the full knowledge of my lofty lineage, stirred up Philip against me ; the artful and perfidious author of my dishonour, my assassin in short, has perished by the hands of Don Pedro’s son ?”

“ No, Ximeno ; God alone holds the life of man in his hands ; my protection follows you everywhere, but when you raise your hand to smite, I shall spread my mantle over your victims. Soon after Philip received this evidence of the crime perpetrated in the night of the surprise, the count also received warning to be on his guard—”

“ Ines, Ines !” exclaimed Ximeno, with profound emotion and admiration, “ you are my sister, my mother, my tutelar genius ! I am unworthy of such tender solicitude ; but you are magnanimous, and your heart is generous towards all.—Come, Ines, come to my arms !”

“ Your arms !” replied the Penitent, with a melancholy smile,—“ have you no other recompense than your arms, for one who has just broken down the insuperable barrier which was about to separate you from the woman you love ?”

“ From the woman I love !” repeated Ximeno, with surprise, “ is it possible that you who know me could suppose that I loved Catalina ?”

“ Oh ! I don’t suppose it ; I have seen it with mine own eyes ; I cannot doubt what I see. Your transports yesterday, your rejoicing to-day, the smile with which you listened to my story a moment since,—what are they but exhalations from the flame which burns in your heart ? What is your impatience but jealousy which you cannot repress ? Ximeno, Ximeno ! It is enough ; let us say no more on this subject. You love Catalina, and I place her within your reach.”

“ And do you really believe that I loved Catalina ? And in that belief have you done all this for me ?”

“ Why not ? I was born to watch over you, and to suffer for you. God has planted in my heart a flame which cannot be extinguished, and in yours an ingratitude which nothing can overcome ; my destiny is cruel, and it is yours to make me suffer. I do not complain, I am resigned. Happy am I that what I have suffered this day has afforded you such complete satisfaction as that which you now experience.”

“ Ines ! I feel all the sublimity of that sentiment ; I am sensible of my cruelty ; but how can I be blamed for the tortures invented by your own ardent imagina-

tion? If you forgive me my love for Blanca, if you pardon that enduring love, sad as the cypress which sprouts from the grave, Ximeno is worthy of you."

"But—for Blanca's sake you became enamoured of Catalina, in whom you see her, in whom you adore her—"

"Yes; I see Blanca in her, because she is her image, but images do not receive the homage of adoration. Believe me, Ines, falsehood, deceit, want of frankness, would be unworthy of your love, of the nobleness of your sentiments, the heroism of your resolutions. My first thought is the chastisement of Leonora, and next the happiness of Catalina. The Queen wished for peace from a selfish motive—in order to enjoy in ease and tranquillity the fruits of thirty years of war; if to prevent this deceitful peace it were necessary to sacrifice the happiness of the Count de Lerin's daughter, I would not have hesitated. But fortunately this union, based on the calculations of a cold and heartless man, is at variance with Catalina's real happiness; and I have only had to fight against the pleasing aspect which the Marshal's love presents to Catalina. Believe me, Ines, she cannot rob me of a single atom of that generous glow which my love for Blanca de Navarre has left in my bosom."

"Are you really, Ximeno, still faithfully attached to Ximena and to her alone?"

"To her alone."

"To no one else?"

"To no one, Ines, to no one. And in proof of this, if the Marshal were capable of loving Catalina after discovering his father's assassin, you would see me encourage their passion."

"Ximeno!" exclaimed the poor Penitent, with a tender smile.

"And if the Marshal's affection cannot resist so hard an ordeal, you will see me employ the great influence I have with the Queen, to bring about a match between Catalina and the heir to the throne."

"My God! what a weight is removed from my heart!"

"For if I cannot see her happy with her lover, I wish at least to see her reign. Ines, nothing more is wanting than a crown on Catalina's forehead to complete her resemblance to Blanca of Navarre!"

"Ximeno, Ximeno!" exclaimed Ines, with a smile of ineffable joy, which must have been akin to that of the Blessed, for it was the joy of virtue; "I believe you, and I give you thanks, because you have understood me, because you have not humiliated me. I

trembled, Ximeno, lest, moved by compassion, you should disguise your real sentiments, and address to me some expression of affection. Ah! you have not done so; you know me, and always preserve your dignity, and a due appreciation of your poor Ines. Ximeno, Ximeno! I am rejoiced and delighted that you love Blanca of Navarre, the poor princess, who deigned to give the name of sister to her sister's attendant in the castle of Orthez, and who, although I was her rival, united our hands when hers were almost cold and rigid in death. Blessed be your constancy, Ximeno, blessed be your love to Doña Blanca of Navarre! Much did she suffer, unhappy princess, in this transitory life, but she must also have felt great joy, when she looked down from her heavenly home, and saw that the frost of years had not chilled the ardour of your heart! Ximeno, Ximeno, come and lean upon my arm—let us enter the hermitage; let us prostrate ourselves before the image of the cross, and pray together to God for the princess of Viana."

The ancient lovers of the castle of Eguarás, entered accordingly, and kneeling before the cross, they remained long in prayer, shedding sweet and copious tears.

"Blanca, Blanca," said Ximeno; "pray to God.

that he may permit me to fly to his bosom, after I have accomplished the terrible mission with which divine Providence has entrusted me."

"Sister, sister!" exclaimed the Penitent, "since I resemble you in my misfortunes, ask God to make me like you also in blessedness."

Both then arose.

"Now," said Ines, "now that Blanca is looking down upon us, it is I, Ximeno, who now offer to you my arms."

The cavalier, with eyes still streaming, pressed to his breast for an instant, the chaste bosom of his former bride.

A recently-arrived entrant witnessed unseen this tender and simple scene.

"I'faith!" exclaimed Chafarote, making extraordinary demonstrations of gladness, "that is what I like, and the devil take fasting and penance, and this miserable anchorite way of living! But give over for the present, for I see coming in this direction several bulky objects, which look something like mules with a kind of litter; and in the litter there is what has to me the appearance of an enchanted woman, as completely wrapped up from head to foot in a kind of mantle, as the saints in passion week."

"Will you never stop your infernal babble?" said the Infanzon, interrupting him. "What is it?"

"It is a litter for you," answered the Penitent.

"For me?"

"Yes, to conduct you to another place, where you will be more comfortable, and more speedily recover."

"Where?"

"To the Queen's palace."

"To the Queen's palace! Good heavens! I want nothing so much at this moment as to be beside Leonora."

"And as it was impossible for you to move a step, she is coming to fetch you."

"She?"

"Yes, the Queen of Navarre."

"At your suggestion?"

"Yes."

"Ines, Ines!" exclaimed the Infanzon, "when will there be a term to your good offices?"

"When my life comes to its term."

"I earnestly desired but two things, and you have procured them for me! But what influence have you over the Queen? How have you managed to bring her to your very hut?"

"With a decoy which may be of great service, and which I shall put into your hands."

And as she uttered these words, she delivered a paper to Ximeno, who unfolded it, and read it with rapidity.

"Gracious powers ! You excite my astonishment more and more. There is no doubt ; it is the handwriting of Leonora !—here she absolves you—she condemns herself ! Oh ! the Chronicler must see it—the friar of Irache—history will pronounce a righteous judgment on the ruthless Countess de Foix—will be as severe as heaven towards her—Oh ! let us preserve it."

Ximeno produced a small ebony box, which opened with a spring, and put the paper inside, saying, "Let it enter into the archives of vengeance."

Yes, keep it ; it is the treasury of my fame ; I have intrusted my honour in your hands."

"And I doubted Divine Providence, supposing that it had abandoned me, at the very moment when it was favouring me most efficaciously !"

"Despair, therefore, is the greatest of crimes."

"Oh ! my faith in the mission which I fulfil increases more and more. Ines, I will go to the palace—the terrible hour of expiation is arrived—you knew my

thought—the twelfth day of February will be the fifteenth anniversary of Blanca's death, and the fifteenth and last day of Leonora's reign ; the death of the implacable poisoner is decreed for that day. Meanwhile she must not enjoy for a single instant the pleasure of reigning—she must be prevented from conferring a single benefit on her people, in order that her memory may be execrated by all. Do you understand ? Will you continue to aid me in this undertaking ?”

“ Yes, I will assist you as I have always done ; but I have to make some modification in your plans ; the Queen's life is under the protection of Divine Justice ; the day on which she repents of her crimes we shall be nobly revenged, the day when you will shed a drop of blood will see my protection withdrawn from you.”

“ Oh ! well then,” replied Ximeno, after a moment of terrible silence, “ Leonora shall not die, she shall not die ; but I swear to you that she shall have to long for death as a remedy for her misery. Chafarote keep a look out, and let me know when these objects approach.”

The hermit went out.

“ Now, Ines,” pursued Ximeno, “ I wish to speak

to Samuel, the old leper, to whom you have given hospitality."

The Penitent advanced to the door of the cave, made a sign, and the cagot soon made his appearance."

"Samuel," said the Infanzon to him, "I am going to the Queen's palace; take this ring, and you will be allowed to enter wherever I may be. Conceal your hands, put on new and ample clothing, so that your infirmity may escape observation."

"Very well."

"Do you know who I am?"

"I know that you are the son of the King of Naples."

"But I tell you I have no other father but you."

While the Jew and the Infanzon were holding this brief dialogue, which was carried on in private, Ines was stationed at the door of the hermitage, waiting for Chafarote's signal, and turning round, she gave the intimation to Ximeno.

"They are now come."

The cagot returned to his cave, giving his hand to his adopted son, who bade him adieu, saying, "Till we meet again, in the palace."

The litter was not long in reaching the shed; a

woman completely concealed by her dress stepped out of it, and entered the hermitage ; she uttered a cry of joy on seeing Ximeno, and then came out again with him, giving him her support ; both entered together into the vehicle, which descended by the same road that it had come.

The night was far advanced when they reached the gates of the city.

CHAPTER IV.

THE reader has, perhaps, not forgotten the terrible interview between Leonora and the Penitent, after the royal festival. On the same night the Queen received the visit of her guardsman lover. And certainly no one could be more needful of such consolation than she who had just suffered from a sudden paroxysm of remorse, and who had allowed to be wrung from her a declaration which subjected her to the caprice of a woman so powerful, resolute, and deeply injured. But how fleeting was that consolation!

Ximeno wished to renew in her the tortures of Prometheus, and after he tore her vitals with disdain, jealousy, and remorse, he created them anew with hopes and flattering visions, only to be gnawed again, and again renewed ; in order that the insatiable vulture of revenge might find inextinguishable agonies for his never-ending repast.

The enamoured princess preserved for a few hours after his visit, the grateful recollection of the last soft words uttered by her lover, and that dulcet echo calmed all her disquietude, and lulled her sorrows, until these pleasing impressions gradually vanished before the assault of new fears and jealousies.

Alphonso had promised to return the following day ; he had vowed that he would write to her in case any unforeseen obstacle might prevent him from returning to her arms, but no letter came, and thus passed a whole day, with its hours of mortal length ; and another, and yet another followed, without any signs of Alphonso's appearance. How restless was Leonora, and how anxiously she inquired of all what had become of him !

Sometimes she supposed him changeable and fickle, and at others the victim of her own enemies. The idea also flashed across her mind that the Penitent might have placed that fatal writing in his hands,—that Don Alphonso, believing her a parricide, must necessarily regard her with horror and detestation.

It was the night of the third day of painful uncertainty, when the lady of honour announced the arrival of a messenger.

“ A messenger ! From whom ? From Alphonso

perchance ? ” asked the Queen, anxiously starting up.

“ It is an old squire of his,” answered Doña Brianda.”

“ Does he come from him ? Let him enter.”

“ No, Señora ; the day before yesterday he came to me complaining that his master discharged him after he had been only eight days under him, and that in his room he had taken Fortun, who has been in like manner discharged, if he has not also had a successor ; and I wished to employ him in your service.”

“ Let him enter,” repeated Leonora impatiently. But then arresting the lady with a look, she said to her, “ Ask him you, Doña Brianda ; my impatience will betray me.—I will listen from this antechamber.”

“ In that case, Señora, it would be better for me to hear him without any witness, and inform you afterwards.”

“ Oh ! do you fear anything ? ” replied the Queen, whose presentiments had already made her suspicious.

“ I think the messenger comes from Lerin.”

“ From Lerin ! it matters not—I will listen.”

And she withdrew accordingly to the antechamber,

leaving the door ajar. As that chamber was dark, she could look unobserved through the opening.

Soon after, a man of middle age entered, clothed in grey, who seemed greatly surprised at finding himself in that magnificent apartment.

"Where do you come from?" asked Brianda.

"I come from Lerin, from the Field of Truth, from many places."

"Have you seen your master?"

"Would to heaven, Señora, that I had not seen him!"

"Why? What harm has he done to you? Are you so revengeful that because he has discharged you—"

"It is not that, Señora; I would have forgiven him all, and a good cudgelling into the bargain, at seeing him as I have seen him—wounded, maltreated, insensible—"

Here there was heard a stifled groan at the door of the antechamber.

"What do you tell me? These wounds are very slight, I suppose, and the swoon of short duration;" and as Brianda uttered these words, she made certain signs to him, which the worthy squire did not put himself to the trouble of interpreting.

"Slight, Señora, slight! my master never faints nor falls from his horse for trifling wounds."

"And where did he receive them?"

"In the Field of Truth."

"Was it in single combat?"

"Yes, Señora, but a base and treacherous combat on the part of the Marshal of Navarre—a single combat of twelve men against one; yes, Señora, and he defended himself like a lion, and made four of them bite the dust; but although he had the breastplate of St. Michael the Archangel, and the spear of St. George, and the horse of Santiago, what the devil could he do against a dozen? against a dozen ruffians sent by the Marshal?"

There was now heard at the door something like the clenching of teeth.

"Sirrah!" said Brianda, in a tone which, though meant to be grave and severe, was angry and agitated; "you are bringing a dreadful accusation against the first gentleman in Navarre. How is it possible that the Marshal should have fought with Don Alphonso, who belongs to his own party? and how is it possible, above all, that a combat, not fought man to man, and with equal arms, could be permitted and engaged in by the Marshal?"

"I cannot tell you how it was done ; but what I can safely affirm is that, however it may have been, it has so happened."

"And do you know the cause of the combat ?"

"Yes, there is no mystery about it. The two cavaliers were at Lerin,—they went from Lerin—"

"Enough, enough," exclaimed the lady, interrupting him ; "you are very tired, are you not ?"

"I believe you, Señora ; from here to Lerin, from Lerin to the Field of Truth, from the Field to here, and all for what? to see my master pierced with lances, and not be able to assist him. Confounded love affairs, Señora ; a curse on love affairs, say I."

"Enough, you have said enough ; I am going to order supper for you ; come with me."

The door of the antechamber was then thrown open, and Leonora appeared, her countenance greatly changed. Brianda rose.

"Senora !" she whispered, as if she meant to give her a caution.

But the Queen, disregarding this kind of reproach, went to the squire, and without any circumlocution whatever, said to him, "You have stated that the cause of the duel was known, and you must say plainly what it was."

"Señora," answered the messenger, in an agitated manner, "my master and the Marshal are in love with the same lady, Doña Catalina de Beaumont."

"Take care what you say," replied the Queen, biting her lip to repress her anger, "take care what you say, for Doña Catalina de Beaumont is my kinswoman, and her honour is mine."

"But, Señora, in what have I injured her?" asked the squire, with the greatest simplicity.

"You do not know, doubtless, that the Count de Lerin's daughter is to be married to the Marshal of Navarre," replied Leonora, disguising her curiosity and jealousy, under the cloak of justice and relationship.

"And, therefore, Señora, Don Alphonso could not consent—"

"To what?" asked the Queen, with indignation. "Unless you wish to be hung up to one of the battlements, as a warning to others, you must explain to me all, and beware lest you utter a single word which will not bear the most rigorous investigation!"

In this way Leonora might learn all without her curiosity appearing suspicious.

"Señora," answered the messenger, "having been charged to ascertain how my master was engaged;

I saw him enter the castle of Lerin ; I saw him appear at one of the windows with Doña Catalina de Beaumont."

"With Catalina ! are you certain ?"

"Quite certain, Señora, quite."

"And the Marshal was then in the town ?"

"The Marshal was then in the square of the town, making his peace with the count, and then both entered the castle ; soon after that, Don Alphonso came out, and went in the direction of the Field of Truth, and very early on the following day, the combat took place."

"Oh ! there can be no doubt ! and this duel—"

"Took place exactly as I have described."

"And Don Alphonso was alone ?"

"Alone ; until a sort of friar, or hermit, who has more than once done him good service, came to his rescue."

"And the Marshal was so treacherous, as to go accompanied with a number of men ?"

"I counted twelve, Señora, between quick and dead."

"Did you see them ?"

"Yes, I saw them, but I was late of arriving ; my horse was not so fleet as those of the Marshal's

myrmidons, who left the castle of Lerin before me ; the Field of Truth is a long way off ; but I was in time to see them fly after they had overthrown Don Alphonso ; I was in time to see my master raised from the ground by the friar, and by a Jew, who must have been a physician, and who assisted him in his benevolent exertions ; I joined them, and offered my aid, asserting my claim to do so as his former squire. This circumstance appeared to give great offence to the hermit. ‘ Hilloh !’ he said to me, ‘ so you were this brave Infanzon’s squire ? ’ ‘ Yes, friend,’ I answered, ‘ and if I am not so yet, it is because my master is in the habit of changing his squires, as he changes his shirts.’ ‘ I believe it,’ he replied ; ‘ Don Alphonso must be very difficult to please in the matter of squires ; he must have had one so perfect as to spoil him, and if Michael the Archangel were to come down from heaven and serve him as he did Tobias, I verily believe he would get tired of him as quickly as he did of you.’ And then taking a lance from the ground, he added, ‘ Sheer off, sir squire, sheer off, for when I assumed the habit, the only vow I took was to make short work with any squire of Don Alphonso that I could lay my hands on.’ ”

“ What ! from fear of the friar, you remain in

ignorance of the place where the cavalier is to be found."

"No, Señora, I did not wish to engage in an imprudent struggle, and I therefore contented myself with following them at a distance, taking good care not to lose the scent."

"And where was he taken to?"

"To the Penitent's hermitage."

"To the Penitent's hermitage!"

"Yes, madam."

"And he still remains there?"

"Yes, Señora."

Doña Leonora did not need any further information. As we have seen, she was assailed by three different suspicions, when she remarked the disappearance of Don Alphonso; the first, that he forgot her for some other woman, the main ground of apprehension with lovers of a certain age, and the principal cause of the want of unison in their affections; the second, that some misfortune had befallen him; and the third and last, that the Penitent might have revealed to him the real poisoner of Doña Blanca of Navarre. Leonora's ears were unhappily so well-founded, that of these three suspicions, at least two had already received full confirmation, and it is

probable that in a few hours the third would be also realised.

Three furies from the abyss could not have tormented her more than jealousy, her lover's danger, and the dread of deserving his contempt and hatred.

The Queen was for some time perplexed, not knowing where she should first apply a remedy; but the heart possesses a logic superior to that of the understanding, and her heart told her that of the two well-ascertained facts, the most certain seemed to be that of her lover's injuries and wounds; and that the probability of the revelation she dreaded being made by the Penitent would be greatly diminished if she hastened to the aid of the Infanzon, whose life was seriously endangered.

She also felt the necessity of venting her rage on some one or other; she required to avenge her lover, and revenge is a passion which easily springs up in a lover's heart; revenge is the first blood-letting which the powerful when offended prescribe for themselves to get rid of their ill-humour.

She remembered she was a Queen, and muttered to herself:

"Hitherto I have not performed any act of sovereignty: the crown has only brought me trouble,

vexation, and annoyance. Let me now then make use of my powers ; if the sceptre does not enable me to govern, I must avail myself of it for the purpose of chastisement. I will now be Queen indeed, I will show that no one in Navarre is more powerful than the monarch. Let those arrogant vassals tremble, who think themselves superior to their kings, because there have been kings so feeble as to submit to the yoke of the feudal barons. Brianda !” she called in a loud voice.

Her favourite attendant again presented herself.

“ Let the governor of Estella come hither immediately.”

“ Mosen Tristan de Mauleon has just arrived at the palace.”

“ Oh ! heaven sends him to me ; let him enter, Doña Brianda, let him enter.”

The duenna left the room, and the Agramontese cavalier, who belonged to the highlands of Navarre, was not long in making his appearance. He was a young man of five-and-twenty, middle size, brawny limbs, harsh features and frank expression.

“ Mosen Tristan de Mauleon,” said the Queen to him, with all the suavity she could muster up at that moment, which was certainly not much, “ Mosen Tristan, you are—”

“From Bastan, Madam.”

“Yes, I know you; I did not mean to tell you that, but that you are brave, resolute, and decided.”

“Tell me what you choose,” answered the governor, almost offended at such flattering language, although it was not undeserved; “I am your most loyal subject—”

“I know it, Mosen Tristan, I know that I possess in you one of my best vassals.”

“Subjects, Madam.”

“Well, I meant that you are one of my most faithful subjects, and the best proof that I esteem you as such is the commission with which I am going to intrust you. I design to chastise a certain noble, and to have him arrested.”

“Mention his name, and I shall set off instantly.”

“You must take twenty lances, for he is a person of very high rank—.”

“Well, I shall take twenty lances.”

“And besides being a man of high rank, he is, or seems to have been, very brave.”

“In that case, if he is so brave as you say, I must crave permission to go alone,” replied Tristan, haughtily.

“No, no,” said the Queen, half smiling at the

governor's bravado, "if it was a matter of fighting I would have sent you alone, but as the only object is to take him prisoner, an escort will be necessary."

"I shall comply with your orders, Madam, and where have I to go?"

"To the castle of Lerin?"

"Oh! is it the count? I will go, Madam, I will go, although you might perhaps have chosen some one more expert in fox-hunting than I am."

"No, it is not the Count of Lerin, it is Don Philip, the Marshal of Navarre."

"The Marshal of Navarre! Ah! Madam, you must choose some other person to execute this commission."

"What! you refuse to obey me!" exclaimed the Queen, in a passion, quite taken by surprise at this resistance.

"I said before that I was your Majesty's subject, and I must now declare to you that I am Don Philip of Navarre's vassal."

"So then there are persons within my kingdom who exercise a higher authority than mine?"

"I swore fealty to the Marshal, before I did to you."

"But, foolish man, did not the Marshal, four days

ago, swear fidelity and obedience to me in the church of St. John?"

"That is the Marshal's affair."

"So I am not to be obeyed in my own kingdom?"

"You will be obeyed when you order nothing contrary to the *fueros*. I shall be the first to shed my blood for you, but not against the chiefs of my party. The *fueros* permit every man in Navarre to choose the master he thinks fit, and not only men, but towns have this privilege. Espronceda was a town which belonged to Gonzalo Martinez de Morentin, but so soon as its inhabitants had become free they chose as their master, Don Carlos of France, your Majesty's illustrious grandfather. Accordingly, Madam, if kings wish to retain the obedience of their people, they must govern in conformity with the popular wish, and even feudal chiefs try to govern better than kings, in order that their vassals may not forsake them and fly for refuge to the throne."

"Mosen Tristan," exclaimed Leonora, in a fury, "in order that I may hear your lessons more fully, you shall remain a prisoner in the palace."

The governor inclined his head respectfully, and the Queen delivered him over to the officer of the guard.

Leonora afterwards made other attempts which were equally fruitless. All refused to accept the commission; some from feelings of attachment to the Marshal, others from fear, and the greatest number from conviction of the impossibility of arresting the chief of so powerful a faction.

The Queen was breathless with rage.

"And this is to be Queen?" she said, pacing wildly through the apartment. "A lie! a lie! the real kings of Navarre are the Marshal, the Count de Lerin, and Mosen Pierres de Peralta! and I am a scarecrow whom they have covered with purple and a crown because it suits their purpose, for the crown cannot gird three heads at once, and there must be a puppet to wear it who cannot excite the rivalry of any of them. Oh! for this so much blood, so much poison, so many of my kindred sent to their grave, so many years of war, and now such cruel remorse! Oh! that I were a man, that I could arm myself with shield and lance, and overthrow, one after another, those miserable bastards, the scum of the royal blood, who would fain equal in splendour, since they cannot rival in purity, the precious metal from which they have been thrown off! Oh! that I had one more

valiant than all, who should humble and confound them. Oh ! I am a poor woman, a poor widow—if I had a husband, a husband like Don Alphonso ! he with his invincible arm, I with my dauntless brow ! Unhappy, unhappy woman that I am ! if I am miserable as a queen, I am still more miserable as a woman. These feudal banditti, recognised by the law, have arms with which they rob me of my lands and castles, and they have daughters to rob me of my lovers. Oh ! the heir of my throne is almost a child, he can do nothing, nothing ! But if I have not men to conquer men, I am a woman that can overmatch women. Yes, yes !” she exclaimed, rolling her eyes like a bacchante, “ my weapons have not lost their point ; he who brewed the poison for Carlos and Blanca is not dead ! Catalina, Catalina ! woe to you, for the royal eagle of Navarre has, from the firmament of her throne fixed her eyes on you, in order to take vengeance for her jealousy of Don Alphonso, and the injuries inflicted on him by the Marshal. They say you were born just when Doña Blanca expired ; they say that you resemble her—your resemblance to her will be much stronger ere many days elapse.”

And as she uttered these words she sat down, qui-

vering with rage, beside a rudely-carved table of walnut tree, and began to write a letter, but her nervous agitation prevented her from forming the characters in that perfect style by which her penmanship was usually distinguished.

“ Let us wait, let us wait a little,” said the Queen to herself; “ this epistle must be written with the hand of a master, otherwise the count, who is so suspicious, might discern by the form of the letters, the agitation under which they were traced. Who knows but this key might be sufficient for him to discover the enigma? Doña Brianda!” she then called, endeavouring to repress her agitation. “ My physician!” she said, so soon as the lady appeared at the threshold of the door.

“ Are you unwell?” asked the duenna anxiously.

“ A little—you know—those horrid pains in my stomach; but I shall soon be well again—tell Jehu to come.”

Leonora was really subject to a stomach complaint which caused her much suffering; but as the reader has doubtless conjectured it was not her physical ailment that induced her to summon the Jewish physician.

In about a quarter of an hour the latter entered,

clothed in the dress peculiar to his race ; and he made to her at the door a profound reverence in the eastern manner.

He was an old man, with a long and luxuriant white beard, very bushy and almost horizontal eyebrows, under which were buried two round and small, but very piercing eyes, and an aquiline nose projecting considerably over his lips, which his beard rendered invisible. When he closed his eyes, he looked like a magician ; his countenance was dignified and severe ; but when he opened them he resembled an owl, and the most vulgar passions, fear and avarice, might be discerned in them.

The Queen made him a sign to approach.

“ I have been told that your Highness’s precious health is suffering—”

“ You have been misinformed, Jehu—I feel indeed some slight uneasiness—but that is of no moment. I have summoned you for another cause. You were my unfortunate brother Don Carlos’s physician, and you administered the poison—”

“ Madam ! ” exclaimed the physician, trembling.
“ Madam ! by the God of Abraham—”

“ Fear nothing, Jehu, we are alone. The poison you gave my brother Carlos, heaven rest his soul,

caused him to suffer a thousand pangs for the space of eight days, and occasioned us a world of anxiety, lest we should be discovered. I afterwards took you into my service, and loaded you with riches ; I asked of you a poison for my sister Blanca, who is now in heaven, a more active poison, and which should produce less pain than the other, and you gave me one so potent, that the quantity which could be inclosed in a ring was perfectly sufficient—to—”

“ To despatch a whole family, although it were much larger than that of your Highness.”

“ Well, then, I now ask from you another poison ; whether it kills rapidly or slowly is of no consequence ; but it must kill without pain, it must kill without leaving any trace of its operation, and above all, it must kill with certainty.”

“ Your Highness can dispose of me as of a slave ; I am the clay, and your Highness is the potter ; your Highness can turn my science, and my hands, to whatever use you think fit. Your Highness may depend on receiving the poison you ask within a very few days ; but I shall be put to great expense—”

“ How much do you need ?”

“ In the first place, a liquid composed of the most rare and costly simples.”

" Well, how much will you have to lay out in procuring these simples ? "

" A hundred florins."

" Bah ! " said Leonora, throwing disdainfully a purse filled with gold on the table ; " you are very moderate, Jehu."

" Yes, but your Majesty does not consider that to deprive this liquid of its algidic virtue, or that by which it causes pain, it will be necessary to pass it through a filter of charcoal powder—"

" Well then," replied the Queen, with a sort of smile, " how much do you ask for the charcoal ? "

" A thousand florins."

" A thousand florins ! Are you in your right mind, Jehu ? A thousand florins for this charcoal ? Come, this is a jest, and I vow to you that I am not in a humour to stand jesting."

" Madam, when you are informed that this dust must be made from diamonds reduced to charcoal—"

" Diamonds ! "

" Yes, Madam ; diamonds can be transmuted into charcoal."

" And this charcoal is indispensable ? "

" Either I am a poor ignoramus in alchemy," said the Jew physician, with an expression of vanity, " or

such a poison as your Majesty demands cannot be made without this requisite."

"Be it so," replied the Queen ; "a thousand florins I have not, and even if I wished to impose new taxes, in order to obtain that sum, the operation would be very slow ; but you shall have as many diamonds as will be necessary, although I should be compelled to remain without a crown. Nevertheless, I am going to dispose of one jewel beforehand."

"To whom, Madam ?" asked the insatiable Jew, fancying that Leonora was going to give it to him as an earnest.

"To the same person on whose account the rest are to be converted into charcoal."

And with a gesture she dismissed the Jew. Having now recovered her tranquillity, she drew up the letter, bestowing equal pains on the expression of the ideas, and the form of the characters ; and calling the duenna she said,

"Select the most precious of my jewels, and despatch it immediately with this letter to my well-beloved niece Doña Catalina de Beaumont, daughter of the Constable of Navarre."

Both were conveyed by the messenger to the castle of Lerin.

CHAPTER V.

WE left the Marshal of Navarre ashamed and confounded. Blind with rage at the provocations of the count, he had for the first time attempted to inflict a fatal wound on one who had no weapon in his hand to return the blow. The unexpected magnanimity of his aged adversary, and the presence of Catalina, cheerful, tranquil, innocent, and covered with the virgin veil, formed such a contrast to the violent state he was in that he could not raise his eyes from the ground, nor utter a single word in his own defence.

“Here I am, Philip,” said Catalina to him in a soft tone. “Do I look well?” she added, with a candour quite free from all savour of vanity.

The count had by this time prudently left the apartment, presuming that the Marshal would have to give Catalina some explanation regarding his visible excitement. Don Philip contented himself with ex-

claiming, with his eyes still fixed on the ground, “ Oh Catalina !”

“ What ! you do not dare to look at me ?”

“ Yes, to see you, listen to you, live beside you is my only delight.”

“ You say this in a tone—— Are you annoyed because I tarried so long ?”

“ You ought to have come sooner, sooner !”

“ Yes, but my attendants kept me so long at my toilette, to gain themselves credit.—Heavens ! how silent you are ! What is the matter, Philip ? Do you not love me now ?”

“ More than life. What is life compared with thy love ? Nothing ; there is nothing on earth that can weaken my love.”

“ Oh ! then I fear nothing.”

“ Yes ! because your conscience is untroubled, Catalina ; but mine does not allow me to accompany you to the altar, and offer you a hand—which is not pure ; a hand—”

“ Come, come,” replied the tender virgin, fixing on the Marshal a seductive look : “ I absolve you of all ; but in truth I did not think you were so scrupulous.”

“ I scrupulous !” said Philip, smiling bitterly.

“ Do you know, Philip, what you look like ? You re-

semble a criminal going to the scaffold, who confesses a hundred times on the way, in order to defer his execution for a few moments."

"If I ask you to delay for a few moments the greatest happiness which any mortal ever enjoyed, it is because I am unworthy of it; because it would be a profanation, sacrilege—"

"But do you seriously wish to suspend the marriage?" exclaimed Catalina, suspiciously; and then added almost with tears in her eyes: "Good and well—I am not in a hurry—whenever you wish—"

"Oh! do not be suspicious, I entreat you. I shall reveal to you all; yes, by heaven, all."

"Yes! I also earnestly wish to have these mysteries cleared up once for all."

"Recollect, Catalina, that when your father interrupted us I was going to make a confession to you."

"I remember."

"Well, then, I was about to tell you that I know my father's assassin."

"Great God! you know him!"

"To a certainty."

"Did you receive a dagger?"

"There it is," said Philip, pointing to the weapon, which was lying on the floor: "I brought it with me."

“ With what purpose, Philip ? It could not be with the intention of hurting my father ?”

“ I brought it to avenge mine.”

“ To avenge him ! unhappy man !” cried the poor girl in horror. “ And I was going to accept the hand which would soon after be stained in the blood of him to whom I owe my being !”

“ Do you not see, Catalina ? I should be a monster if I had not repented soon after I had conceived such a project. On seeing and hearing you the cloud of blood which surrounded me was dispelled, but you went away and your father provoked and insulted me ; he wished to drive me to a desperate deed, and he succeeded.”

“ What do you say ?”

“ I lifted my hand, and—”

“ Unhappy man, why did you not fly rather than come to see me ? What have you done to my father ?”

“ Oh ! fear not, your father was secure, otherwise he would not have provoked me. But I am grateful to him, Catalina, because he has made me see the abyss into which I was about to plunge. This is my confession, Catalina ; my fate is now in your hands,

you can acquit or condemn me. I wished neither to renounce your hand, nor my revenge ; I have now laid open the last fold in my heart—I have nothing more to say. I know my father's murderer, and forgive him ; and you know me as I am—”

“ And I also forgive you !” exclaimed Catalina, in a solemn and compassionate tone.

“ Catalina, do not decide from pity towards me, nor from regard to our country's calamities ; for I swear, whether I am united to you or not, never to unsheathe my sword again in civil warfare.”

“ No, Marshal, the sentence I have uttered is that of love, which excuses your transgressions, and understands the value of your promises as well as the generosity of your nature. Never, never, Philip, did you appear so great in my eyes as now, after this display of frankness and resolution.”

“ Never, never was I so happy as I am now, Catalina, my bride.”

“ Do you fancy that those who slumber in the tomb delight in vengeance ? Do you imagine that the smoke of blood will ascend as grateful incense to the abode of the just ?”

“ No, no ; my father must look complacently on my union with one who is so like the angels of heaven.”

"The dead are not appeased with cries of vengeance," pursued Catalina, animated by love and patriotism; "but with the accord of two enemies who atone, though late, for the error of him who died with hatred of his brother in his heart."

"Oh! unspotted dove, come once more, come to my arms; and in order that our marriage may seal at once our happiness and that of our country, let me leave you for a short time."

"Leave me?"

"Allow me to undo my work. I had, in a few hours, made some preparations for war; I wished, in my blindness, to tear you from your father's arms, and take you to my castle, after I had revenged myself; and there are yonder, in the forest of Baigorri, some of my friends, who may perhaps be approaching the castle in their impatience. Let me remedy these imprudences before they are known."

"Yes, you must go; but I tremble, I know not why."

"Tremble? Courage, my Catalina, chase away your apprehensions."

"It is not fear, but presentiment."

"Presentiment! pooh, nonsense! Do you doubt me, my bride?"

"No, I would sooner doubt the sun which shines upon us."

"Then what do you fear?"

"Nothing, indeed."

"Adieu, Catalina; adieu, my wife."

"Philip, dost thou love me?"

"Do I love thee! Thy love has subdued the most violent passions of my heart. Can there be a greater triumph?"

"You are right; go then, Philip, but do you promise to return quickly?"

"I will return when I am worthy of you; when I can present myself with an erect forehead. And are you not going to give me a farewell embrace?"

"Ah! for the last time."

We have already informed our readers that the Count de Lerin had given orders to his soldiers to take possession not only of the towns and fortresses which the Marshal was to deliver up on the day of the nuptials, but also those which were to be transferred to him at a later date. In this operation lay the secret of the master-stroke with which that wily politician intended to surprise the two great and powerful monarchs, who looked on as deeply-interested spectators,

and anxiously desired to get the game into their own hands.

His men executed his orders with such promptitude and success that the Constable scarcely did anything else from morning till evening but receive messengers who brought him letters conceived pretty nearly in the following terms :—

“ On this day the castle of Viana was delivered up to the noble cavalier, Don Carlos de Artieda. 3rd of February, in the year of our Lord 1479.

“ The Governor,

“ PABLO DE ZUÑIGA.”

“ I, Sancho de Ubago, have delivered up the town of Losarcos to Diego Martinez de Meneses, in conformity with express orders to that effect from my lord the Marshal.

“ As I cannot write I affix this cross.

“ SANCHO DE UBAGO.”

“ Neither does Meneses sign, for the same reason ; but he has seen this document, which is correct, and affixes his seal of wax impressed with the pommel of his dagger.”

“ The garrison of the castle and bridge of Lodosa has been relieved by the troops of the Count de

Lerin, this 3rd day of February in the year of grace,
1479.

“ JUAN DE GOÑI.”

Some documents of the same kind, which did not seem, judging from their brevity, to be executed by notaries or scriveners, wanted both signatures,—that of the entering and that of the out-going governor; but nothing further could be inferred from this want of formality than that these manœuvres had been executed in great haste, and it would have been folly to expect minute accuracy in intimations which were purely confidential.

With his mind at ease on this point, and rejoicing in the success of his schemes, the count received an intimation of a quite different kind to the rest; he was apprised by the Penitent, that his future son-in-law had the mysterious dagger in his possession, and knew the secrets of the night at Pampeluna, wherefore she advised him to be upon his guard.

The count smiled calmly on receiving this warning; he clothed himself in a coat of mail of the finest workmanship, and which fitted his body completely; over it he wore a doublet, and over that the knight's tunic and mantle, as he was accustomed to do on days of high ceremony, and when he exercised his functions as con-

stable or supreme judge of the kingdom ; and now certain that the best-tempered blade would be shivered like glass against his body, he went to see the Marshal with a smile of disdain on his lips, and with that tranquillity which never deserted him on the most critical occasions, intending to ascertain whether there was any truth in the Penitent's warning, and resolved to provoke his enemy and defeat his plans.

This part was played by the count to admiration ; sagacious, artful, cool, and insolent, he did not require any great exertion to make a youth of irascible temper, and quick and sudden impulses, break through the bounds of prudence and reserve.

We saw him indifferent at first, while he was engaged in observation, then provoking, insolent, and hypocritical, when his observations had confirmed the truth of the intelligence he had received, and, at the last, great, generous, magnanimous, when the Marshal had been led into an error which made him cast down his eyes with shame an instant after it was committed.

The Marshal was an automaton in the hands of the count, who, by means of the secret but unerring springs of the human heart, regulated all the movements of the artificial man, making him lay his hand on his dagger, brandish it, and strike the blow, on the

occasion, and even at the very moment, which best suited his purpose.

In this manner, Don Luis de Beaumont was not only enabled to get rid of a secret menace, but obtained a real superiority over his enemy, and fettered him with the only chains which can enthrall a noble heart,—generosity and gratitude. From the moment that Philip dealt the avenging blow, the count regarded him as more in his power than the humblest of his vassals.

An event, however, occurred which caused him to change his opinion entirely.

Scarcely had he left the apartment in which the bride and bridegroom remained, when his old and faithful partisan, Carlos de Artieda, made his appearance,—the same person, as our readers will remember, whom the count had commissioned to take possession of the most important of the castles which were to be restored by the Agramontese party on account of the marriage.

“ Oh ! ” said the count to him with surprise, “ are you so soon tired of the good town of Viana ? Whom did you leave in the castle ? ”

“ The devil, who may take us all if he likes, Señor Constable,” answered Artieda, in evident ill-humour.

“What the deuce!—You seem to be greatly displeased with the military exercise you have had this morning. You cavaliers, who will scarcely take off your armour to go to bed with your wives, seem unwilling to leave your castles unless for the purpose of cutting and slashing. Confess, however, my friend, that our early start this morning is worth more than one battle to us.”

The count spoke somewhat more than usual, which was, with him, an indication of good humour.

Carlos de Artieda measured the apartment with long strides, each of which was accompanied by a snort in a sharp, and oaths and execrations in a grave tone. This music excited the alarm of Don Luis de Beaumont.

“What!” he exclaimed, “can they have played us some scurvy trick?”

“Both played and won, Sir Count; played, and won, which is worse.”

“What!—Pablo de Zuñiga —”

“Pablo de Zuñiga is a double-distilled rogue, and all the Agramontese a pack of knaves; while we, Don Luis, are nothing but a set of boobies to allow ourselves to be thus hoaxed by such canaille.”

“Come, Don Carlos, tell me quickly what has hap-

pened ; let us not scream and scold like women, about something which, perhaps, does not matter a straw."

"Not matter a straw ! Good and well, if you are so indifferent as all that, it is of little consequence—good and well, say I, if the castle of Viana has no more value in your eyes than a harvest boothy—good and well."

And the newly-arrived cavalier continued striding up and down, growling and swearing, while his spurs and armour clattered noisily in accompaniment.

The count tried to keep up with his enormous strides, but being old and low in stature, his steps were comparatively short, so that he was greatly distanced at either extremity of the chamber.

"Let us see ;—so the castle of Viana is lost ?"

"If it is not lost, I don't know anything that is."

"Lost ! so those villains do not respect or obey the Marshal's orders ?"

"Of course they respect them !—Damnation ! of course they obey them !"

"Explain yourself, for heaven's sake, Don Carlos ; did you enter into the castle ?"

"Without any difficulty."

"Did you show Don Philip's order ?"

"It was my first care."

"And then?"

"Then I asked the keys of the castle from Pablo de Zuñiga and those of the town from the governor, and I remained waiting for them on the esplanade. You know that one need not ascend to enter, and I did not even alight, nor the twenty lancers I brought with me. Well, sir, they tarried, and tarried, and tarried, and I cursed them over and over again for their delay. We looked at one another, and although none of us Beamontese wished to speak, I could nevertheless bear it no longer: I raised my voice and said, 'Ho! Sir; if these keys don't come, we shall go to fetch them.' And as I had raised my visor to speak I saw— You know, Sir Count, the arrangement of the castle, since it was in your hands so long; you know that when you enter by the North gate, which is the principal one, you come to a sort of terrace, crowned with battlements, and that behind there rises above it the main body of the castle, with huge towers at each side; well, then, in these towers, and in all the upper part of the fortress, I saw the points of a hundred crossbows, some with balls and others with arrows; and I saw the muzzles of a hundred arquebusses, which were all quietly and securely aimed at our

breasts ; and behind these points and these muzzles I saw the glaring eyes of the Agramontese, and I heard the voice of the governor, Pablo Zuñiga, saying to me very coolly, with a sort of smile which made my blood boil :—

“ ‘ Friend Artieda, castles which have cost so much blood to take are not to be given up, in this way, in exchange for those pothooks you have brought me.’

“ ‘ Sdeath ! villain,’ I replied, ‘ this treachery will cost you dear, and the Count de Lerin will take signal vengeance.’

“ ‘ Have a care what you say, Mosen Carlos,’ he answered ; ‘ for if you don’t hold your tongue, I shall, with a single word, riddle your body with a hundred bullets. It is not our wish, however, to do you any harm.’

“ In short, Sir Constable, I have no patience to repeat all the folly and insolence which I was obliged to submit to ; from all he said, however, I could infer that you have been most villainously deceived by Don Philip of Navarre, who, while he was subscribing these contracts, gave orders that the castles should not be delivered up, even on the presentation of his own signature ; and that the governor wished to detain us for

three or four hours, that we might be prevented from sending you intimation of what had taken place."

"The devil!" exclaimed the count, scratching his occiput.

"But," pursued Carlos de Artieda, "I could not bear any longer to stand there cooling my heels in the open air, and we rushed therefore to the gate, burst it open, and, although their crossbows did some execution among us, we escaped into the square of the town, and then left Viana, with a much stronger desire to return and cut in pieces Pablo de Zuñiga with all his Agramontese, than to come and tell you so unpleasant a tale."

"But at last—"

"At last—What the devil could forty men do against the place? What, but to put our tails between our legs, and take the road to Arcos. 'God keep you!' cried Pablo de Zuñiga, as I left. 'May he keep you and Viana, until you fall into our hands!' I answered, almost choking with rage."

"Oh! you are right, Carlos de Artieda, the revenge we shall take will be signal; and I swear to you that some one I know will hear these last words before his death," said the Count de Lerin. "But let us proceed. At Losarcos at least you would find Diego

Martinez de Meneses, who had doubtless already taken possession in my name—”

“I’faith, you are well informed, Sir Constable, of what is going on !”

“What ! at Losarcos also ?”

“Yes ; also at Losarcos.”

“But I have received a sealed letter, with the arms of Diego Martinez de Meneses.”

“The thing is quite clear : Diego Meneses has been taken prisoner, disarmed, and—”

“That town also !”

“That town, and all the rest of them, for the plan was general, as vast as ours.”

“Well ! It certainly was a good joke to busy myself all day with despatches, intimations, and messages,” exclaimed the count, with a venomous smile : “Well—I cannot complain ;—they have made me acquainted with the signatures of all the Marshal’s castellans and governors—important autographs, which I shall remember as long as I live. Fortunately the Marshal is in the castle, and we can laugh together at—”

“What ! is Don Philip here ?”

“Yes, the Marshal is here, and I am going to thank him for the sport he has afforded us.”

"And married already?"

"No, not yet," answered the count, calmly; and this delay is certainly convenient for me; inasmuch as before I give him my daughter's hand, I must hasten to reply to the castellans from whom I have received intimation—"

"Answer them! Zounds! in what manner?"

"By sending them the head of Don Philip, Marshal of Navarre."

The proud fabric of the Count de Lerin's ambitious schemes had just been demolished; it could never have been said of any one with more propriety that he had built castles in the air. His soldiers were gradually straggling homewards, some without arms, others maltreated, and all downcast, calling for vengeance, and denouncing the perfidy of the Marshal, who, as the reader knows, was never more innocent, never more a stranger to the stratagems which were laid to his charge.

Carlos de Artieda was right in asserting that their adversaries' plan was probably as extensive as the count's, and that, if they were in time, they would take good care to prevent a single battlement of all the Marshal's castles from falling into the hands of the Beamontese.

The count's emissaries were everywhere received with demonstrations of respect, and submission to the orders which they brought, but no sooner had they placed their foot within the walls, than they were treated as prisoners. Then the castellans, or governors drew up a despatch, and either obliged their Beumontese prisoner to sign it also, or they took his sword and sealed it with the pommel ; and a soldier who was unknown brought the document to Lerin, over-riding his horse in order to get the reward for such good tidings from the fortunate count, who was recovering in one day, as much as he had lost in ten years of warfare.

It must be said, in honour of Mosen Pierres de Peralta, who is supposed to have been the author of this stratagem, that after keeping them for a few hours in durance, he set free the prisoners, who returned humble and downcast to the territories of the Beumontese chief.

For the very reason that the latter, by the fact of taking possession of all the castles in one day, showed himself to be suspicious, mistrustful, and even regardless of the spirit of the contracts which had been entered into ; for the very reason that he had richly deserved such a trick, it annoyed him more than

anything else could possibly have done. He had fallen into the trap which he had laid for his enemies.

Nevertheless he entered calmly into his daughter's chamber, with his everlasting and almost mechanical smile of evil omen, seeking, like the fox in the fable, for the stag on whose horns he should climb up and escape from the pit into which he had fallen.

He scrutinised the whole apartment with a single look, and his lips became white with rage when he saw that Don Philip was not at the side of the fair betrothed.

Nevertheless he asked in a soft and composed voice, "And the Marshal, my child?"

"The Marshal," replied Catalina, somewhat confused; "I don't know how to tell you—"

"That he has gone out?"

"He will return soon."

"So then he has gone away?" replied the count, raising his voice.

"Yes, father, but fear nothing."

"Who told you that I have any thing to fear?"

"I know all; he has just confessed it to me."

"He has just confessed it to you!" said Don Luis fixing on his daughter a look, piercing as that of the eagle, sinister and treacherous as that of the hyena.

"It is but a short while then since he left this?"

"This very minute."

"Good, good!" exclaimed the count, and quitted the apartment.

In a few minutes he returned, with the same expression on his countenance ; but, although there was scarcely any observable difference in it, it seemed clearer, if possible.

"Come," he said, renewing the conversation, "what did your future husband confess to you?"

"All, father, all!"

"All ! that is very vague ; all may be an interminable concatenation of crimes, and it may be nothing of any consequence."

"Oh ! I am sure you love your daughter too much to put her to the shame of repeating it ; you have forgiven him, and I have also granted him pardon. Has not Philip an excellent heart, and do not all his errors arise from the goodness of his heart?"

"He is a very good, frank, and simple youth. Ha ! what means that dagger lying on the floor ?" added the old man, fixing his eyes alternately on the weapon and his daughter.

"I know all, father, I know all."

“And is that all that Philip has confessed to you?”

“Good God! What more then?” asked Catalina, with alarm.

“What do you see in my words more than they contain? I simply asked if there was anything else pricking his conscience. It is a customary question—among confessors.”

“Philip said that he was going—to undo some machinations or other.”

“Ha! so he is engaged in machinations? There is no doubt, it is he!” muttered the count, with suppressed rage.

“He wished in a moment of delirium to break the truce, to prosecute the war.”

“I am very glad, very glad.”

“At what are you glad?”

“At his conversion and repentance, and even that he has gone from hence; for, my child, the match must by all means be suspended.”

“Must be suspended? I don’t understand you.”

“But there is no obscurity in my language. I mean to say, that whether Philip were in the castle or not the marriage must be suspended.”

“Why?” asked Catalina, with anxiety.

"Why? why? because the Queen orders it," said the count suddenly, as if he had just adopted a resolution.

"The Queen! and is the Queen really opposed to our union?"

"Pshaw! the Queen is not, cannot be opposed. The Count de Lerin, although he has only two castles left, is yet, with the remains of his greatness, at least as powerful as the Queen of Navarre. But far from opposing, Leonora, in testimony of her affection and approbation, sends you a magnificent marriage gift, and desires to be your godmother, for which purpose she invites us to go to court."

"Indeed, father!"

"There is the letter which I have just received."

"And Philip, who will acquaint him with this news?"

"That concerns me."

"Will you let him know?"

"No, he is already informed. So soon as I learned from your lips that Don Philip had gone, I gave orders to Carlos de Artieda to overtake him and inform him of everything."

"How kind you are, dear father! Give me the letter if you please."

"There, you may read it."

Catalina read aloud:—

“ Most excellent and magnificent Constable of Navarre,

“ Inasmuch as rumour, which never wearies in proclaiming events, has brought to my ears intelligence of the marriage of my very dear and well-beloved niece, Doña Catalina de Beaumont, to the illustrious and most noble Marshal of my kingdom, I am rejoiced beyond measure, because I most earnestly desire the happiness of my dear niece and the welfare of my vassals, which cannot fail to arise and result from such a union.

“ I therefore send you this jewel in token of my satisfaction, and earnestly entreat you to come to my court in order that I may be your daughter's godmother at the foresaid marriage, if it is not celebrated already; but if it is, I nevertheless beg you to come, in order that you may enjoy yourselves in a manner befitting the occasion.

“ Pray to God for my welfare, as I humbly pray to him for yours.

“ From my palace of Estella, on the second day of the month of February, the day of the Virgin Mary's purification, and the fifth day of our reign, in the year of our Lord 1479.

“ LEONORA.”

"Ah!" said the maiden, her cheeks fresh and blooming as the rose of spring; "we shall go to Estella, shall we not, father?"

But she waited an answer in vain. She turned her head and saw her father conversing with a cavalier.

"So you were not able to overtake him, Don Carlos?" said the count.

"By the time I got on horseback he was leaving the forest of Baigorri," answered the warrior.

"We have lost the first trick, my friend."

"Do you wish me to challenge the Marshal, Mosen Pierres, and all the other Agramontese cavaliers,—to carry everywhere fire and sword?"

"No; it is now more than ever necessary to appear tranquil and friendly. Let us stake the rest on the second trick."

Carlos de Artieda withdrew, growling and muttering curses on a game which was so ruinous to them. The aged count returned to his daughter, who was looking at him, with the letter in her hand; and, as if he had been attending to her words and not to those of the departing cavalier, he said to her—

"You were asking, my child, if we shall go to Estella?"

"Yes, I was, but I thought you did not hear me."

“ Yes, I was listening to you ; and even though that were not the case, I could have divined your wishes by a glance at your countenance. Do not be afraid, my child, we shall go to-morrow to Estella.”

“ To-morrow ?”

“ Yes. I am going to make preparations for our departure,” said the count, lifting from the floor the famous dagger with which he had slain the Marshal’s father.

The next day, accordingly, father and daughter left Lerin, the latter in a Moorish litter, with elegant gildings and blinds, the former on horseback, and attended by a considerable escort.

C H A P T E R VI.

AFTER the royal festivities were over, the castle of Estella resembled rather a mausoleum than a palace.

The ladies and gentlemen of the Court had not trod since then the gloomy granite stairs which gave to the edifice the appearance of a state prison. Leonora's children, the infants of Navarre, had been for a long time absent from their mother; neither did Doña Magdalena, Princess of Viana, and widow of Gaston de Foix, reside there: that sepulchre was only occupied by a corpse—the Queen. For she could not be said to live who passed weary and endless hours beneath those dismal arches, with haggard brow, restless eyes, wan and wasted countenance, and lips contracted with suspicion;—she could not be said to live who heard no other noise than the echo of her own footsteps, who saw only mute sentinels, and who felt none of the joys of domestic life; the only ties that

bound her to her family, being the agonies of remorse. Since the death of her first-born son, whom she loved so much, and for whose sake, perhaps, she had perpetrated the greatest crimes, she found no pleasure in the society of her other children, when she remembered the gallantry and accomplishments of Don Gaston ; nay, she probably even dreaded lest they might also be seized with the same haste to become her heirs, as she had manifested in coveting the inheritance of her brother and sister.

They lived, therefore, beyond the limits of the kingdom : the continual and ferocious war by which it was distracted being the pretext for their separation from their mother ; and Leonora had no one to converse with except Brianda, to whom she talked about her ill-starred loves, and Jehu, with whom she discoursed on alchemy and medicine, potions for her ailments, poisons, and antidotes.

This sort of existence had become much more wretched since the day of the coronation ; hitherto, all that she had gained by being queen, was an increase of misery and misfortune. We have already seen how her authority was despised by those feudal lords, who were much more powerful than herself ; we have already seen how the Penitent compelled her to

write a declaration which implicitly revealed who was the murderer of Doña Blanca of Navarre ; with that document she had placed herself in the hands of a woman whom she could not persecute, without exposing herself, at the first attempt, to the publication of a secret which it concerned her so much to hide from the world.

Three days after her interview with the Penitent, Leonora received a letter couched in the following terms :—

“ She who has in her possession a document written by your hand, *begs you* to repair immediately to the hermitage, in a litter, in order that you may return to the palace with a wounded man, who says he is one of your guard, and calls himself Don Alphonso of Castille.”

Leonora did not, certainly, need the well understood threat implied in the hint about the declaration, in order to fly to the assistance of her lover. The messenger who brought intelligence of the Infanzon’s disaster, confirmed, as we have seen, Ines’s letter ; or Ines’s letter arrived in confirmation of the messenger’s information,—a point which history has not yet completely cleared up, although we adhere to the opinion, which seems to us the most probable, that the letter

came subsequently to the message ; but, be that as it may, certain it is, that Leonora, frantic with jealousy, felt strongly tempted to abandon the Infanzon to his fate ; and, far from flying to succour him, she rejoiced, or, at least, she said to herself that she rejoiced at his wounds, or even his death. And in the meantime she gave orders to get ready the litter—and the minutes seemed to her ages—and she ordered a room to be prepared for him, and waited impatiently till the night should set in ; and at length she took her seat in the litter, and went herself to the hermitage, as she would trust none with the commission to convey Ximeno to the palace.

In the short distance between Rocamador and the castle, the Queen did not utter a single word, and did not remove the veil from her eyes a single moment, although the darkness of the night was a sufficient disguise to her countenance. Ximeno alighted in the principal court, from whence he was conveyed to an apartment on the ground floor of the building.

Here there was nothing wanting that could promote the ease, comfort, and amusement of the Queen's suffering guest :—a soft and luxurious bed, a famous physician—even Jehu himself—seated at his bedside, Leonora's favourite duenna ready to bring him every

kind of beverage and aliment which the physician ordered, a superb chimney which diffused a grateful warmth in an atmosphere chilled by the cold night dews, books and papers on the tables, which were doubtless placed there to gratify the Infanzon's taste. It might easily be perceived that all these arrangements were made by a woman who studied to please him and captivate his heart. And if nothing was wanting, neither was there anything superfluous; although Leonora, from a feeling of delicacy, did not again present herself to her wounded lover, whom she might have severely accused either in words or by her silence.

Thus passed the first night, thus passed the next day, and another, and another, to the great vexation of Ximeno, who had not allowed himself to be taken to the palace, from the paltry desire of recovering more quickly, but to see Leonora and remain beside her, in order to prevent his enemies from traducing him. He wished to guard her against such treachery, he also burned with desire to ascertain the fate which had ultimately befallen Catalina, and accordingly every time that Brianda, the physician, or the servants entered his chamber he tried to obtain some information from them as to what had

occurred at the castle of Lerin, and Brianda would answer—

“ Hush, for the love of heaven, Sir Knight ! hush, for God’s sake ! you do not know the mischief your words produce.”

“ Mischief ! to whom ? wherefore ?”

And the duenna would lower her voice, and say mysteriously, “ She is listening to you.”

“ Well, then, take me to her presence.”

“ Impossible, Sir Infanzon, impossible.”

“ But I am easier, I can leave my chamber.”

“ Leave your chamber !” repeated Brianda, shaking her head with an air of doubt,

“ Yes, Jehu has said so. I cannot make any great exertion, or put on my armour, but I can get up ; I can walk.”

“ Silence, I beseech you, Don Alfonso ; the Queen is listening to us ; she does not leave this for a moment. Oh ! how she loves you, and how much suffering you cause her !”

“ But tell me, I entreat you,” replied Ximeno, lowering his voice, “ tell me if I am a guest or a prisoner.”

“ Neither ; you are detained here.”

“ How ?”

" You cannot leave this for ten or twelve days."

" Ten or twelve days!" exclaimed Ximeno, as if struck by a thunderbolt. " Ten or twelve days constitute my whole existence. Within ten or twelve days it will not matter to me whether I am bond or free, dead or alive. But why this detention? wherefore this tyranny? why that term?"

" Why?" answered Brianda, regarding him with compassionate looks, " because you love Catalina, and Catalina is in the palace."

The duenna said nothing more, and she went away, fearing she had said too much.

It was not possible to utter words, even though chosen expressly, which could have sounded more terribly to Ximeno in his present situation.

The first idea that occurred to him, and which fixed itself most obstinately in his mind, was, that the Count de Lerin had come to the city, accompanied by his daughter, and revealed to the Queen her lover's real name, showing her that Don Alphonso of Castille, the Infanzon of Navarre, was Ximeno, the former captain of the outlaws, who was enamoured of her sister, the same person she had pitilessly and perfidiously affronted at Orthez before the principal nobles in the kingdom. Once acquainted with this secret,

Leonora might easily penetrate the hidden designs of her guardsman ; and this was the way in which he accounted to himself for his detention in that apartment, which he now regarded as a prison, and for the term of twelve days, of which Brianda had just spoken to him. He who had for fifteen years ardently longed to find himself in the presence of Leonora, now Queen of Navarre, on the anniversary of Blanca's death, he who intended to appear to her in the light of her final judge, and demand from her a strict account of all her crimes on that terrible day, was now subject himself to the caprice of his victim.

Ximeno could not for a moment bow to such a calamity ; his heart rebelled, his understanding could not comprehend how Divine Providence, which does not permit crime to remain unpunished, could condemn him to the fate which he was preparing for Leonora ; and he resolved to engage in a desperate struggle with his destiny, to burst through his prison, to go forth—and what then ? What could he do ? with his wounds scarcely cicatrized ; detected by the Queen ; without any defence ; without any means of placing himself face to face with his enemy, now on her guard against the coming vengeance. There was no help for it ; his plans had miscarried, it was neces-

sary to invent others, and put them—although violent and terrible—immediately in execution. In order to overcome his enemy he would have to annihilate her.

Moreover, what was Catalina doing in Estella? Had the Count and the Marshal again become reconciled? Conscious of Luis de Beaumont's schemes, he regarded him with utter dismay;—for the aged Constable, the alliance with the Marshal was an indispensable condition. “But nevertheless,” reflected Ximeno, “if the Marshal and Catalina were married, is it not more likely that the enamoured pair, instead of coming to Estella, would seek the retirement and solitude of their castle. Neither, in that case, would the Queen be jealous, or at least her jealousy would not be so keenly alive; whereas, according to the favourite duenna's information, Catalina is in the palace, and Leonora more jealous than ever. Great God! how the Queen's words rush upon my memory—‘How should I, who did not pardon my own sister and brother, extend forgiveness to a rival?’ Oh! I feel a presentiment of some terrible calamity, my heart is ill at ease, and trembles, trembles for that innocent and unhappy child, who bears so great a resemblance to Blanca of Navarre. What if she should also meet the same fate! What if, in like

manner as I was the involuntary cause of Blanca's death, I should be fatally and irresistibly led to occasion the destruction of Catalina!

"I see it clearly!" pursued Ximeno, in consternation. "God is chastising me for having resorted to deception in order to chastise the Queen. I pretended to be her lover, and in order to torment her, I allowed her to believe that I loved Catalina, on whom she accordingly wreaks her vengeance, and if Catalina dies, I shall be answerable for her death before the tribunal of God. Oh! how blind, how erring are those who harbour the impious idea of preventing or directing the lofty designs of Divine Providence! I meant to punish the guilty, and the blow descends upon the head of the innocent. Fatality, fatality! or rather Providence, Providence!"

But although Ximeno at length discovered his error, at the end of fifteen years, he was not prepared to retrace his steps in the path which he had entered. All his efforts sufficed merely to arrest him for an instant, only that he might fall again with greater rapidity into the gulf whose bottom he now began to despise.

He thought of flight; but, above all things, it was necessary for him to bear in mind that Leonora, as

Brianda informed him, was in ambush, and perhaps watching his every step, his every movement ; and it was probable that at the first symptom of returning strength, at his first attempt to escape, the Queen would call her guards, redouble her vigilance, and make his captivity more close and rigorous. It was therefore of the utmost importance to avoid exciting suspicion, to ponder deeply, and calmly adopt some resolution, and carry it into execution with promptitude and energy.

He had no hesitation in preferring gentle to violent measures ; in employing cunning and seduction rather than force.

His apartment, situated, as we have already intimated, in the basement of the castle, had only one window, which was defended by a double grating ; and it was madness to think of breaking the thick and solid bars of iron ; besides, whether it were from accident, or obedience to orders, a sentinel was always to be seen beneath his window. His chamber, on one side, communicated with an apartment not less strongly defended, and, on the other, with the interior of the palace. It was by the latter that Brianda and Jehu came and went ; the door was secured with very strong locks and bolts, and it was more than probable

that there were doors behind that which opened into his chamber.

To escape by main force was impossible. It is true that he was provided with a sword, but he wanted his armour. He had in his possession the Queen's declaration in favour of the Penitent, which might be employed as a means of intimidation ; but of what use could that important document be to him, while he was shut up in prison ?

The only result produced by his long and anxious meditations was, that he felt himself incapable of taking any resolution ; that it was necessary, at all hazards, to try and obtain further intelligence ; and that he must not forget for a moment that the Queen would, in all probability, be listening while he was engaged in procuring such information.

After all his reflections, he felt that he had no other resource than dissimulation and seduction, if the Queen did not yet know who her favourite was, and that, if she did know, there was no other alternative than submission or despair.

In the meantime the lady returned.

“ Doña Brianda,” said the Infanzon to her, when she presented herself, “ you know very well that it is

impossible for this to continue much longer ; will you take charge of a letter for me ?”

The duenna turned her head unconsciously towards the door, and Ximeno concluded that Leonora was at hand.

“ A letter ! you are always thinking of leaving this. Do you think you are not well treated then, Sir Knight ?”

“ No, by no means, I have regained my health ; I am attended by the most famous physician—”

“ The highest, too, in the esteem of Don Carlos, Prince of Viana, who is now in heaven.”

“ And carefully nursed by the most amiable of the Queen’s ladies of honour.”

“ Thanks for the compliment, Don Alphonso, but the letter—I entreat you for heaven’s sake not to think of leaving your apartment for a few days.”

“ Very well, Doña Brianda, I submit : I was wrong, I will conform ; but there can be no reason why I should not write—”

“ Write, write !” said the duenna, chiding him almost maternally, “ to whom ? to Catalina ? Catalina it is then !”

“ No, no, Señora.”

“ To your friend the Count de Lerin ?”

"My friend!" repeated Ximeno, catching up the expression, and looking steadily at the lady, "neither is it to him! Come, it is in vain for you to dissemble your penetration: it is not to Catalina, it is not to *my friend* the Count de Lerin, it is to the Queen."

Ximeno placed some emphasis on the word friend in order to convince himself whether Brianda was sincere or not. She answered quite naturally, "Ha! it is to the Queen then? you are doubtless going to ask her to give you your liberty?"

"No, I am going to thank her for her hospitality, and request her to come and see me."

Brianda made another movement to look round to the door, and her countenance assumed a certain air of satisfaction. This was the first time that it occurred to the sick man to apply to Leonora.

"Have you written this letter?" asked the duenna, with a look of interest.

"Ah! I did not reckon on your kindness; forgive me, Señora."

"Why not? nothing more natural, nothing more just, than to wish to quit your confinement."

"You forget that I do not ask for liberty; I merely wish that the Queen would not deprive me of her presence."

“Indeed, Sir Knight, her rigour does seem to be carried too far.”

“Do you think that Leonora will accede?”

“How can I tell?” said Brianda; but at the same time she let drop her eyelids with a sort of smile which signified: that is precisely what she desires.

Ximeno had too much penetration not to know that this was no falsehood.

“I assure you,” pursued the Infanzon with marked significance, “I assure you that if Leonora knew the mysteries which my heart conceals, she would not show so much cruelty to me.”

“Mysteries!” exclaimed Brianda, with curiosity and simplicity.

“Yes, mysteries. Do you not think, Señora, that I am a strange, extraordinary, mysterious person?”

“Yes, indeed; your conduct in respect to Doña Catalina—”

“Now, sir, it is clear,” said Don Alphonso to himself, “the Queen knows nothing, or at least has said nothing to Brianda regarding your real name.”

“The Queen also suspects that you are not frank, that you conceal something from her,” added the lady in the most unaffected manner.

“Suspects ! she has conversed then to you about me ?”

“Several times.”

“She knows then what is going on in my heart ?”

“Yes, she knows that something extraordinary is going on there.”

Ximeno fixed on the duenna a look with which he tried to penetrate into the inmost recesses of her mind.

“Something extraordinary !”

“Yes, for example, it is impossible not to know that you love the Queen—or at least that you loved her.”

“No, that I love her,” replied Ximeno in a cold and piercing tone.

“Very well, it cannot be denied, at the same time, that you love Catalina de Beaumont.”

“Catalina de Beaumont ! It is true, I cannot deny it ; I said so myself to Doña Leonora.”

Brianda here repeated her customary movement, and threw a glance to the door, and at the same time directed a supplicatory look to Ximeno.

“I love her,” he pursued, affecting not to understand the duenna ; “I love her with an affection which does not exclude another kind of love ; I love her with the affection of a brother, of a father, which will not allow me to consent to her marriage with the Marshal,

but which will present no obstacle to her union with any other. For example, Brianda, does not she, the descendant of kings, the niece of the Queen, deserve to be the wife of an Infant of Navarre?"

"Would you really consent to Catalina's marriage to—"

"To any one but the Marshal."

"I don't understand these things very well, but a marriage with the Infant of Navarre seems to me to be a very good project."

"Magnificent—but I speak without knowing what has occurred during the last few days—without knowing whether Catalina is still free."

"She is still free, the marriage has not yet taken place."

"Oh then, if she is not yet married, I undertake to convince the Queen;—and I shall succeed as sure as I am Don Alphonso of Castille."

This name uttered expressly by Ximeno to see what effect it would produce, made no particular impression on the duenna.

"Good and well," said Brianda; "I have now nothing further to wish for than that you would let me know what you keep so carefully in an ebony casket which I have observed."

"Ha! it has excited your curiosity, Doña Brianda?"

The duenna made a slight gesture, which meant
"Not mine, but the Queen's"

"You certainly do not belie your sex," added the Infanzon, in a complacent tone. "And what do you fancy this casket may contain?"

"How should I know? Perhaps love tokens."

"You have guessed rightly."

"Indeed!"

"I see your curiosity is getting stronger and stronger, and I will hasten to satisfy it before it becomes more excited."

Ximeno took from his alcove the ebony casket which he had when in the Penitent's hermitage, and pressing a spring, the lid flew open with some force.

The duenna approached in order to see better what the box contained.

"Papers!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, love letters; and you will excuse me if I show you only the signature."

"You may save yourself the trouble as I cannot read."

"It does not matter; I am sure that this hand is not unknown to you."

“ These pothooks are very like those the Queen, my mistress, makes.”

“ In fact this reads, *Leonora de Navarre*.”

“ And that ring?”

“ You do not require much learning to know whose it was,” said the Infanzon, taking up a gold ring.

“ It has a coat-of-arms.”

“ Come near the light. Do you not see a bridge on that shield?”

“ Yes.”

“ And a castle on the bridge?”

“ Yes; quite distinctly, and seven coins in the circumference.”

“ These are bezants. Do you know that shield?”

“ Ha! the arms of the Countess de Foix!”

“ It is, indeed, the armorial bearings of the Counts of Foix.”

“ The ring, then, was also Doña Leonora’s?”

“ No one but she can lay claim to it.”

“ Ah! I have great pleasure in listening to you! and these phials?”

“ These are not tokens of love, but rather articles of medicine — elixirs, balsams, and things of that sort. I have lived at Florence, Rome, and other places, and

you cannot imagine how useful they may be where poisons are so much in use as at those courts."

"Oh, Don Alphonso, Don Alphonso!" exclaimed the duenna, transported, "it seems as if an angel had suggested my questions and your answers. Give me the letter."

Ximeno inferred from all that was said by the duenna that the Count de Lerin had not disclosed the secret of his name; but might not the contrary have also happened, and might not Leonora have kept the count's revelation buried in her heart, in order that she might not expose herself to so deep a humiliation before her own favourite attendant?"

Resolved to pursue the course which he had traced out for himself, and which furnished him with such valuable discoveries, Ximeno hastily wrote the letter and delivered it to the duenna.

He had extracted much from this conversation, and he, therefore, conceived a strong desire for others.

"Well," said the Infanzon to himself, "I have examined one witness, but I must have another. Brianda," he said aloud, "I begin again to feel some pain from my wounds; if you meet Jehu in your way tell him to—"

“ Ha !” exclaimed the lady suddenly, and as if the name of Jehu had recalled something to her mind. “ I forgot the principal thing—you who are so learned, and know everything, can you tell me what charcoal is used for ?”

“ Charcoal !” replied Ximeno, astonished at such a question, and then added with simplicity, “ I don’t know for what else it is used than for fuel.”

“ No, it is not that ; I wished to know what can be made with it—no, it is not that neither that I was to ask you, but—but what are its properties.”

“ Ha ! what are its properties !”

“ Yes, the charcoal of diamonds.”

“ The charcoal of diamonds !” exclaimed Ximeno, with unfeigned wonder.

“ Is it true that diamonds can be converted into charcoal ? To me it seems impossible—a thing so white and hard !”

“ But, nevertheless, it is certain.”

“ Heavens ! it must be by witchcraft, and nothing else.”

“ It is a secret in science known but to very few. I am amazed that it can be talked about by women, when I supposed myself, perhaps, the only person—But who has told you this secret ?”

"Do not put questions to me which I cannot answer."

"You are right," observed Ximeno; "I must not ask questions of you, but answer those which you may put to me."

"Well, then, tell me what are the properties of charcoal made from diamonds."

"The same as those of any other."

"The same! are you sure of that?" demanded Brianda, unable to suppress a smile of satisfaction.

"Perfectly certain. But you fill me with surprise."

"But tell me, what are the uses of charcoal?"

"Charcoal purifies liquids, wards off corruption, and absorbs moisture."

"And one charcoal is as good as another for those purposes?"

"Quite the same."

"Oh! I shall bring very good news to the Queen, Sir Knight; I think you will soon obtain your liberty."

Brianda departed.

In case the Queen might be observing him, Ximeno took care not to appear thoughtful, and after walking up and down a little in his apartment, he laid himself down on his couch to indulge in undisturbed reflection.

"Let me meditate calmly," he said to himself, summoning up all the energies of his mind, all the force of his imagination; "perhaps the present is the critical moment in which the problem of my whole life is to be solved. As regards the duenna, it is indubitable that matters are in just the same state as before my illness; I am Don Alphonso of Castille, the Queen's guardsman, the lover—more or less ungrateful it matters not—the lover of Leonora. Catalina is not married to the Marshal; there is no other difference than that the count's daughter is in Estella. For what purpose has she come? This is what I have to find out."

After reflecting for a few moments, during which he repeated one by one all the questions and answers in his last conversation, he added :

"There is nothing, absolutely nothing in what I have just heard, that can explain to me why the count's daughter has come to the Court; nevertheless, this matter of the charcoal is exceedingly strange; the question was put immediately after I mentioned Jehu, consequently it has some reference to the Jew. This is as clear as daylight. Who but he could have penetrated into this arcanum of alchemy, which has been revealed to very few? Who but he could have spoken about such matters with the Queen? Well, next, who

is Jehu? Queen Leonora's physician, formerly physician to the Countess de Foix, and before that to the unfortunate Prince of Viana. Carlos died of poison at the instance of his stepmother and sister; Jehu attended him in his last illness; Jehu afterwards passed into the service of his sister; Jehu, then, was her accomplice; Jehu administered the poison to his master, the unhappy prince. The younger sister of Carlos also poisoned Blanca of Navarre; I saw, I saw the livid countenance, the blackened lips of the hapless princess; I heard the final groan of her death agony. All these symptoms are indelibly fixed in my memory, and I have since, by dint of study, come to learn the kind of poison with which Leonora destroyed her sister's life. I know it well, and cannot be mistaken now. The Countess de Foix had drunk of the same cup, and the same liquor as Blanca; the poisoning was subsequent to that—it was rapid—that was no ordinary substance, and which could be prepared by inexperienced hands—Jehu was then physician to Leonora—and it is very probable that Jehu brewed the noxious drink. Probable, probable!* No, it is almost certain. In this age of barbarism, in this kingdom where the only study is that of arms, who could have known this acid but the Jewish physician? Now, then, for what purpose could

he have spoken to Leonora about the diamonds? To give her some medicine or some poison, that is unquestionable. Jehu is covetous; avarice is depicted in his countenance. Availing himself of the ignorance which prevails even among gentlemen and courtiers, he probably endeavours to extort from Leonora a great number of diamonds. It must be a great number, otherwise the Queen would not have taken the alarm so far as to entertain suspicions of being deceived, and to wish me to remove her doubts. Leonora is not lavish, neither is she parsimonious—oh! for a few jewels, more or less, she would not put herself to the trouble of making this investigation. There is no question, it must be a great quantity of diamonds that the physician pretends he will require—either for some medicine, or some poison.

“Here is my doubt, let me examine this point:—whether poison or medicine, it is only to be applied to very serious cases—either to relieve an intense pain, to cure an almost desperate malady, or to gratify a terrible revenge, for Jehu would not be so foolish as to propose such costly means of remedy in an ordinary case. In that of Constantine, for example, a bath of children’s blood was not recommended until he was almost given up neither can the sovereigns of

this span of earth, which is called Navarre, afford to exhibit the barbarous luxury, the splendid caprices of Cleopatra, or the wife of Crassus, who dissolved eastern pearls of incalculable value, in a goblet, that their lovers might drink thousands of sestertia, at a draught. If it is a disease, it must be one of so serious and deadly a nature, that the Queen would not hesitate a moment between living without diamonds and dying with them. Now, is Leonora in this predicament? No, she has no other physical ailment than her stomach pains; but even if she were afflicted with a deadly disease, would she be watching so about my apartment? would she have remarked that I have a casket in my possession? Should I not have discovered the truth in the countenance of Brianda, who is so incapable of dissimulation? And besides, what object could she have in concealing the fact from me?—none whatever. The Queen, then, is not seriously ill, neither has she a strong interest in preserving the life of any one, unless it be my own, which is now out of danger; consequently, it is not a remedy that is in question to save life, but a poison to take it away. But against whom is this implacable woman plotting? On whom has she fixed her basilisk eyes? On whose forehead is the hand of death to be laid? Ines, Catalina, and

I, may be regarded by her as enemies. As to Ines she is out of the question ; her seclusion, her mode of life, protect her from such attempts ; and to poison me, that am obliged to partake exclusively of those aliments, which she chooses to give me, nothing can be more easy—nothing more simple than to mix it with my food ; in the situation in which I am now placed, my life is certainly not worth many diamonds—she can buy it very cheap.

“Catalina alone remains to be considered. In order to entice her to the Court, some artifice has been employed by the Queen, who looks upon her as a rival the more hateful to her, the more beautiful, youthful and angelic she appears in her eyes. Leonora wishes to be revenged, she has probably asked for some poison which cannot be easily detected—she has, perhaps, heard of the *acqua Toffana* of Florence, and ordered Jehu to—and Jehu, taking advantage of the opportunity—Oh ! my God ! this explains all ; there can be no doubt. My heart forebodes dreadful calamities, and the fault will be chargeable to no one but myself, will be entirely mine.”

Ximeno, bathed in cold perspiration, tossed about in his bed. His restlessness was so great that it would not allow him to think, or remain longer in a state of inaction.

He who loved Catalina so deeply ; he who felt so sincerely interested in her happiness ; who had so many years watched over her destiny, enlightening her mind and forming her heart ; who beheld in her the transcript of his adored Blanca of Navarre, now saw himself urged on by some strange fatality to be the cause of her destruction.

He rose hastily from his couch, and paced up and down in his sombre apartment, uttering deep and hollow sounds of impatience, like a lion in his cage.

He approached the grating, to see if he could speak to the soldier who stood sentinel beneath.

He cautiously made signs to him, entreated him to approach, but the sentinel abruptly turned his back upon him.

The case was now getting desperate, and Ximeno was beginning to doubt the goodness of God, who seemed to have forsaken him at the most critical and decisive moment ; but that impious thought passed like a flash of lightning from his mind.

From mistrust in Divine Providence, he came to entertain mistrust of himself, to feel discouraged and dejected.

“ What if I am not the person chosen to fulfil this

mission? What if I, instead of promoting, have impeded the designs of heaven?"

He then returned to his bed and fell upon his knees.

He prayed fervently to God to enlighten him in that fearful conflict; he then rose and drew forth the ebony casket, and examined one after another the different objects which it contained.

"These are my arms, offensive and defensive; with this I can restore Catalina's health, and revenge myself on Leonora. But it is necessary to know precisely what poison has been administered to the count's daughter; and it is also necessary that heaven should place the Queen in my power. What avails all this to me while I am shut up here?"

Ximeno closed the casket, and added,—

"Let us wait; let us wait a few moments. Yet who knows but all may depend on a single moment?"

He began to pace to and fro again, unable to calm the terrible agitation of his bosom.

Suddenly he heard footsteps outside his room.

The arrival of any person whatever was to Ximeno a motive for rejoicing. In the circumstances in which

he was placed, nothing was more dreadful to him than silence, solitude, desertion.

The sounds came nearer, and then was heard the noise of the key and bolts.

Ximeno turned his head, and found himself face to face with Jehu.

CHAPTER VII.

"Ha! Sir Knight," said the physician to him, "I have been told that you are suffering from your wounds."

Ximeno could not help shuddering at the sight of that personage, whose venerable aspect cloaked so many crimes. Nevertheless he endeavoured to repress his feelings, and answered with all the composure he could assume; "No, Jehu, I am better."

"Let me try your pulse;—nervous—hurried—you have need—"

"Of nothing, Jehu, of nothing; I am perfectly well," replied Ximeno, lowering his voice, "and I have only sent for you, because, after being shut up so long in this apartment, I naturally desire to converse with some one, and especially with one who is so learned as you are in the secrets of nature."

The Jew bowed and muttered a few commonplace

words in modest acknowledgment of the compliment."

"What conception have you formed of alchemy?" asked the cavalier; "have you devoted yourself to the search for the philosopher's stone?"

Jehu cast a suspicious look around, and then answered, shrugging his shoulders:

"The philosopher's stone! We Jews do not engage in such investigations, but rather seek for gold in commerce and labour, wherever it can be honestly obtained; it is the Christians, sir, who, in ignorance of the true sources of wealth, have recourse to magic and mystery, in order to discover it."

"But whether gold comes by magic, or by scientific discovery, you would not refuse it?"

"For my own part, Sir Knight, I require nothing; the Queen supports me."

Ha! in that case," said the Infanzon, "I will keep my secret; if it is certain that you need nothing—"

"Nothing for myself," answered the Jew, opening his small green eyes in a very significant manner; "nevertheless, our brethren suffer such cruel persecutions—they are so oppressed, so harassed!"

"I understand; charity constrains you to dedicate yourself to an art in which I have made great advances"!

" You ! " exclaimed the physician, with wonder and curiosity. " You ! have you discovered those magic words, which it is necessary to utter at the critical moment of the transmutation of copper ? "

" Ha ! I perceive that you also are not a stranger to the mysteries of — "

" I confess, Sir Knight, that from mere curiosity, I sometimes in my laboratory — "

" You have a laboratory ? "

" Complete, Señor, complete."

" Alembics, retorts, crucibles, phials, capillary tubes — "

" Everything, everything ! "

" Oh, then, my friend, we are happy."

" Happy ! we are happy, means that we are rich."

" Yes," answered Ximeno, " for we shall, without any delay, form a mercantile company for the production — "

" Of gold ? "

" Something more precious than gold."

" More precious ? "

" Yes, the diamond."

" I don't understand," replied Jehu, turning pale.

" Oh, the thing is very simple. I, Don Alphonso of Castille, knight and Infanzon in the service of the Queen

of Navarre, and you, Jehu, physician to her Highness, establish a company for the manufacture of diamonds ; do you understand ? In this company I invest my talent, my invention, and you contribute your phials, retorts, crucibles—”

“ But we were speaking of gold, Sir Knight, of gold.”

“ And which do you prefer, gold or precious stones ?”

“ What we can acquire most easily ; I have laboured much at alchemy, very much !”

“ And have profited nothing.”

“ True.”

“ Because the philosopher’s stone is a lie and a delusion ; but a delusion which, instead of spreading darkness through the world, has illuminated it with truths. How many new properties must you not have discovered in bodies, while engaged in those numberless experiments and combinations ! Eh ?”

“ Yes.”

“ How many medicaments, how many deadly substances !”

“ Oh ! great numbers of these. I compare the world to my laboratory : for one balsam there are a hundred poisons ; for one means of giving life there are a hundred for taking it away.”

“ Well then, in my illusive chase after gold by

means of the philosopher's stone I have stumbled on a reality much more precious, much more brilliant."

"What? tell me," exclaimed Jehu, with a look of wonder and avarice.

"Can you not guess? The diamond—the artificial diamond."

"But, how if the diamond is a simple substance, a pure—"

"You are mistaken, Jehu; the diamond may be decomposed, may be reduced to charcoal."

The Jew looked at the knight as if to discover a deeper significance in his words, but Ximeno uttered them in the most simple and natural manner with which the expression of his countenance was in perfect keeping.

"Ha! do you know that secret?" asked the physician.

"And do you hear it for the first time?"

"Up to this point I knew all."

"Then you knew half as much as I did."

"The half!"

"Yes, because you only knew that the diamond can be converted into charcoal—a knowledge which is quite sterile," added Ximeno, raising his voice a little; "for what, I ask you, can any man gain by destroying a precious substance in order to form from it another which is utterly worthless? To destroy, kill, annihi-

late—do you call that science? what matters it whether charcoal be made from diamonds or from a piece of wood?"

"Silence! for the love of heaven!"

"In what does one piece of charcoal differ from another?"

"Speak lower, Sir Knight, I beseech you by the God of Moses!"

"You are right, they may hear us, and this conversation must not be heard by the profane; your secret is sterile, I repeat, it only serves to destroy; but mine is fruitful, it has the power to create; you make charcoal of diamonds, and I make diamonds of charcoal."

"How?"

"The how is the capital which I embark in this undertaking, and you—"

"That is—tell me, what have I to venture?"

"The apparatus."

"But that is very little, and you will not give me more than a very small share of the profit."

"The half, Jehu, the half."

"My God! the half! to what can I ascribe such generosity?"

"The poor and the rich can be generous if they

really part with what they have ; but he who is immensely rich, he whose treasures can never be exhausted, cannot be generous, my friend, because his gifts can never make any impression on his fortune."

The Jew was quite dazzled on hearing these words ; his eyes seemed starting from his head with ecstasy, and for a moment he thought himself master of all the gold in the world.

"And is this all true ? do you not deceive me ? are you not trying to tempt me ?"

"We shall make a trial this very night."

"Where ?"

"In your laboratory."

"But how are you to get out of this chamber ?"

"That is your affair."

"My affair ?"

"Exactly ; it is a part of the capital which you invest in this scheme, a part which, taken together with your crucibles and alembics, will entitle you to the half of the proceeds ; that is to say, the half of all the riches in the world, since in the long run the whole must come into our hands."

"And the Queen ? what will the Queen say ?"

• "It must be your affair to keep the matter entirely

from her knowledge ; we shall work by night and sleep during the day ; at any rate I shall always be a prisoner, at night in your laboratory, and by day in this apartment."

"Agreed ; but I have to impose on you one condition."

"Let us hear it."

"Swear to me that if you should be asked by any one—the Queen for instance—whether charcoal from diamonds is used in the composition of a certain kind of poisons—"

"A certain kind of poisons ! It seems to me, Jehu, that an entirely opposite question is more likely to be asked."

"It does not matter ; for the interests of our co-partnery it is necessary you should say as I wish."

"Ah ! if it is necessary for our interests I shall be faithful as your partner, and never do anything which may turn to our prejudice ; tell me, if you please, with what kind of poison you pretend to mix this ingredient, in order that I may be able to give a complete confirmation to the artifice."

"With slow poisons, which kill infallibly, but after the lapse of many days."

"I understand, a deadly, active substance, mixed in·

a certain dose with harmless substances, which at length produce some ordinary disease, nervous attacks, for example—”

“ Yes, that’s the thing.”

“ And if the Queen should ask me how such a liquid is to be composed, you wish me to answer—Well, I understand. You may keep your mind easy; nevertheless, it is now my turn to impose on you a condition.”

“ How! do you wish to have a share of my diamonds?”

“ No, my friend,” exclaimed Ximeno, smiling; “ do not alarm yourself about such a trifle; we shall not divide your diamonds but mine. My condition is of quite a different nature; in place of that liquid with which you supply the Queen, you must give her this other which I have here.”

Whereupon Ximeno took out of his ebony casket a small bottle containing a very clear liquid.

The Jew took it in his hands, applied it to his nostrils, and exclaimed :

“ This is tincture of ammonia.”

“ Precisely.”

“ The antidote to—”

“ Precisely.”

"But then the Queen will not obtain what she wants."

"Precisely," repeated Ximeno, shrugging his shoulders.

"And I shall lose my reputation, my influence with her."

"And unless you do what I bid you," replied Ximeno, with a calm but terrible voice, "you shall lose the Queen's diamonds, you shall lose mine, and then you shall lose your life."

"Very well, very well, you shall be obeyed," answered Jehu, trembling.

"Till night, then."

"Till night."

"Ha! I forgot," added Ximeno, "return me that phial, you must have that preparation in your laboratory."

The limbs of the old man, with venerable beard and grave deportment, tottered beneath him as he departed, and his whole body was agitated by nervous tremours, which redoubled when his imagination was assailed by these three images—the Queen's diamonds, those of the knight, and the danger of his own life.

"Oh! there can be no doubt!" exclaimed Ximeno,

so soon as Jehu disappeared, “I know all, I have discovered all. That was my chief object. Now for my liberty. Will this Jew fulfil his promises? I am not certain; and, besides, it is long till night, and in the meantime—it was necessary to see the Count de Lerin!”

At that moment there was heard the voice of some one humming a tune, and then a metallic sound which seemed to come from the direction of the window.

It was the sentinel who was pacing up and down outside, and who, doubtless, stumbled by accident, striking the grating with the point of the pike which he carried on his shoulder.

“I wish I could gain that man,” said Ximeno; “I wish I could inspire him with sufficient confidence in me to convey a warning to the count.”

The sentinel’s pike came a second time into collision with the bars of the window, and a soldier wrapped in a cloak of coarse woollen stuff with a hood, approached the window, and took a cautious survey of the interior of the apartment.

It seemed to Ximeno that this man did not do so from mere curiosity, and that he intended to say something to him; he hastened, therefore, to the grating,

but so soon as the sentinel saw him take that direction, he resumed his tune, and began again to pace up and down.

The Infanzon approached the window and saw a man of bulky frame, who looked at him askance, with a singular expression.

When the sentinel passed before the grating he suspended his song for a moment, and said in a low and hurried voice: "Are you alone?" and resumed his tune.

"Alone," answered Ximeno, surprised at the scene, which partook somewhat of the comic.

"Can I speak to you freely?" asked the soldier, suspending his song but not his promenade while uttering these words.

"Speak, speak! no one hears us."

"Deuce take it, Sir Captain, you have made a sorry bed for yourself to lie down in. Hang me," he added, without looking to the window, "but you have behaved more stupidly—"

"Chafarote!"

"That's the way, that's the way! why don't you bawl louder—toora, loora, loora—in order that we may be heard by those who are coming to relieve me—tala, rara, ran—and that after taking so much

trouble everything should go to the devil—ton, toron, toron—”

“ Well, leave off your singing, my friend ; come here, and let us talk at leisure.”

“ Yes, come here, in order that the Queen, or her ladies, or her domestics, who are observing us, should come and seize me, and flay me alive. Zounds ! but you have got into a pretty mess. By the horns of Barabbas——”

“ Chafarote, do not lose time with your swearing.”

“ Since I hung up my friar’s dress in order to disguise myself as a soldier, I feel a sort of—I could take a surfeit of oaths, after having fasted for so many years. Tell me, master, are you here of your own free will, or are you detained by force ? Are you a guest or a prisoner, sick or sound ?”

“ Can you doubt it ? I am a prisoner against my will ; you must try to get me out of this at all hazards.”

“ You shall escape—what more do you want ? Come, tell me quickly, for I think I hear the footsteps of those who are to relieve me ?”

“ What do you know about Catalina ?”

“ That she is in Estella.”

“ In good health ?”

"Rather poorly."

"Is it known what ails her?"

"Hum, hum!" answered Chafarote; "the Penitent is not ignorant of the cause of her illness."

And the sentinel as he said this put his thumb to his lips, raised his hand and opened his mouth, as if he were drinking.

"Ha! you must first of all apprise her father—he must come here—do you understand? he must come immediately to see me, in case I cannot set myself free."

"It is already known to another person who interests himself for Catalina more than her father."

"The Marshal?"

"The same."

"Who informed him?"

"Who but she who supplies all remedies, all consolations, who forgets everything in order to do good—the holy woman—the Penitent!"

"That is not enough; her father also must know it, and not only know it but find a remedy. Approach, Chafarote, stretch forth your hand through the grating so as not to be observed—so; take this phial and give it to the count—it is the antidote for his daughter. Will you swear to me that the count or

Catalina will have it in their possession within an hour?"

"I swear it by all the dev—saints! But I don't need to swear when I am taking in, it is only when I am giving out. However, in taking care of others you do not think of yourself. Matters would be in a fine pass if there were not other persons in the world who watched and worked for you."

"Chafarote, Chafarote!" exclaimed Ximeno, with a look of profound gratitude.

"Ines, Ines!" modestly replied the squire, and then added, "farewell, they are coming to relieve me; but before that operation is gone through I have to perform another; that is, I have to transfer my pike and cloak to an old comrade, the real sentinel, who lies ensconced in this sentry-box."

Soon after Chafarote disappeared, the door of Ximeno's prison opened and the Queen entered.

It cost him at first a violent effort to repress the hatred and indignation which Leonora's new crimes excited in his bosom; but the reflection that all his plans, now so far advanced, might be frustrated if he were thrown off his guard for a single moment, enabled him to keep down his feelings.

The Queen came to him magnificently dressed, but more pale and meagre than ever. It might be easily seen that she had suffered very severely during the time that she had kept out of her lover's sight.

"Alphonso! Alphonso!" she exclaimed, in a husky and agitated voice, "I am come to see what it is that you desire."

"What I desire!" replied Ximeno, softening his voice as much as he possibly could; "I desire to see you, Señora, nothing more than to see you beside me."

"Ah! is it indeed true that you sent for me?"

"Yes, I committed that indiscretion, or I was guilty of that weakness. Be seated, Señora, be seated, it is but right that you should lighten somewhat the heavy chains of a prisoner."

"You a prisoner! you who are the master of my destiny! you a prisoner who have the Queen for your slave!"

"If you are my slave, confess that you have a very indulgent and unexacting master, for I have not yet shown my authority either by demands or commands."

"But in exchange you have delighted in torturing me, in lacerating my poor heart."

“ How could I do so, enclosed within these four walls, confined to a bed of sickness, without seeing, without speaking to any one ? ”

“ Nevertheless, how much have I suffered ! ”

“ Indeed, madam, I observe that your health is impaired ; I discern traces of sadness in your eyes, and in your whole appearance something I cannot describe.”

“ Great God ! ” exclaimed the Queen in alarm, “ Do you really remark that, Alphonso ? And what do you think of it ? what do you imagine it can be ? ”

“ I imagine that you are suffering severely,” said the Infanzon, in a compassionate voice ; and then, shrugging his shoulders, he added with vivacity, and in a natural tone, “ and it cannot be otherwise, Leonora, it cannot be otherwise ; the throne has its joys and pleasures, but it has also its sorrows and disgusts.”

“ Joys ! pleasures ! I have not known them since I became queen. Jealousy, jealousy has cruelly torn my poor heart—has turned me mad, my Alphonso, driven me to actual frenzy. During all those days when you thought I was far from, and unmindful of you, I did not desert you for a single moment ; I saw and listened to you, drinking in all your words and

looks, and every time your lips opened to ask for Catalina, or the count, or for those who were in any way connected with her, my heart was pierced with a thousand daggers. Jealousy, however, is not new to me, it is my constant torment since I first loved you. But do you not think, Alphonso, that the symptoms which you observe in my countenance cannot be produced merely by moral causes?"

"What do you mean, Señora, are you sick?"

The Queen made a frightful gesture, which she endeavoured to mask by a bitter smile.

Ximeno perceived what was passing in the heart of the wretched woman, who was receiving the most terrible, and at the same time, the most simple and natural chastisement at the hands of Providence.

"What do you think?" she said; "what do you think? Am I or am I not sick?"

"There can be no doubt, Señora, that moral sufferings very speedily undermine our health; but if I am allowed to speak frankly, I think that these symptoms do not arise so much from mental as physical disorder."

"Don Alphonso! Don Alphonso! you are not mistaken; my mind suffers, but my body is also a prey to cruel tortures."

“Those pains perhaps? That slight ailment which you used to complain of occasionally?”

“Yes; those pangs now kill me. But, you who know as much as the doctors themselves, look well at my countenance; do you not remark my parched lips, and that livid circle around my eyes? Do you not observe certain faint spots appearing—”

“It is long since I noticed them,” replied Ximeno, opening his eyes to the utmost, and shaking his head with a melancholy air; “and if you were not surrounded by persons so faithful—so loyal—I should say—that perhaps—”

“Finish, finish!” exclaimed the Queen, in terror.

“I should say that perhaps—you were—”

“Why do you hesitate? Why do you not confirm my suspicions? Why do you not say at once that I am poisoned?”

“Poisoned? by whom? Do not think so; although indeed those reddish spots which I have noticed on your forehead—that shivering—that—”

“Oh! there is no doubt, Alphonso; your words have convinced me; I am poisoned.”

“Poisoned, but how? In your drink, in your food, by accident, by design?”

“I have suspected it for several days past, for

several days I have tasted no beverage except water procured by my own hands, and no food of which my ladies do not first partake ; but there are poisons which kill by inhalation, by absorption, by simple contact ; there are others which kill after the lapse of a considerable time, producing diseases which have well-known names, and which are not usually attributed to poison."

"I see you are much versed—"

"Yes, I am so to my misfortune ; for this very knowledge only serves to destroy my peace of mind, to make me suspicious and apprehensive, to torment me more and more."

"But, Señora, who, among all your court, do you believe capable of perpetrating such a crime?"

"All," answered the princess with an expression of terror, "all. He who sits upon a throne has enemies in who all surround him ; he must distrust them all."

Ximeno smiled, and inwardly recognised and adored the hand of Divine providence which makes the very crime of the delinquent the instrument of his own punishment.

"Why do you smile, Alphonso ?" asked the Queen ; "do not my agonies move you to compassion ?"

"But do you really feel them ?"

"What does it matter even if I did not feel them, since there are poisons which kill without inflicting pain?"

"I smile, Señora, because my studies have placed me in a position which enables me to laugh at such insidious arts. You are profoundly versed in the means of destroying, and I on the contrary have devoted myself to the consoling science of restoring life, or warding off death: in one word you are acquainted with poisons, and I with antidotes; you are alarmed at your own knowledge, whereas mine, as you see, makes me smile."

And the former Captain of the Free Companions did indeed smile, but in such a way as to make the Queen tremble.

"What do you mean?" she asked, with disquietude.

"That you should keep yourself tranquil, Señora; I congratulate myself on possessing the means of restoring you to health."

"Is it possible? Oh how deep, how deep a debt of gratitude must I not owe you!"

"Do not exaggerate the obligation, Señora."

"Not exaggerate! Ah! I am now more than ever attached to life. Now that I am Queen, now that you love me, now that I have certain plans—I vow to

you, Alphonso, that I never clung more ardently to life."

" Well, doubt not, Señora, that God will gratify so just a desire, doubt not that heaven has inspired me with the thought of sending for you, that you might reveal to me your suspicions. Come, be calm, Leonora, and let me know to what description of poisoning yours belongs."

" How should I know ?"

" At least you may suspect ; unless you speak frankly it will be impossible to save you."

" Impossible !"

" Absolutely."

" But if I have no certainty, if I do nothing more than suspect—because my stomach pains increase every day, I am gradually getting weaker, my countenance is disfigured, and you have observed yourself that I had symptoms—"

" Just so ; but have you been lately carrying about with you any poisonous substance ?"

" Yes, but with a thousand precautions."

" And what poison was it ? Who prepared it ?"

" Jehu, who gave it to me carefully secured in a phial of Venetian crystal."

" Did it contain a limpid liquid ?"

"Yes, yes."

"With a strong odour, as of bitter almonds."

"It is the same, the same."

"Bring me the phial immediately," said the knight, in a tone which indicated the urgent necessity of obedience.

"Here it is," replied the Queen, taking it from her bosom.

Ximeno examined it attentively at the light, and shuddered. But, endeavouring to conceal his horror, he fixed on Leonora a piercing look, and said to her in a solemn tone—

"Señora, you have poured two or three drops out of this phial."

"Yes, yes," answered the Queen, trembling—"by inadvertence—in opening it I let three drops fall upon me."

"Upon you! no. Do you wish to know what this liquid is? Order the servants to bring here one of the mastiffs which are usually in the guard-houses."

The Queen obeyed mechanically.

Her fear and remorse did not allow her to offer any resistance to the mandates of the man to whose hands she had intrusted her life.

She went to the door of the apartment, issued an order and returned.

In the meantime Ximeno opened the bottle, which was secured with a small golden stopper covered with wax and parchment; he took a feather, and placed the whole on a marble table.

A squire soon made his appearance, bringing an immense dog secured by an iron chain, tied to his collar.

The animal, which had thus far followed the servant, as quietly as a lamb, struggled to escape, and howled most piteously as soon as he entered the chamber, as if he discovered instinctively the sad fate that awaited him.

Ximeno, however, removed his alarm by a thousand caresses, which the dog rewarded by licking his hand.

"Observe, Senora, observe," said the knight. He then dipped the feather in the phial, took up with it a drop of the crystal liquid which it contained, and touched the dog with it in the corner of the eye.

The animal fell dead, as if struck by a thunderbolt.

The Queen trembled.

The terrified squire dragged out lifeless a creature that had come two minutes before leaping and bounding with joy.

“ You see now, Señora, the nature of this poison ; a single drop kills like a dagger planted in the heart. If three drops had fallen on you what would have become of you ? There is no substance more active, no spirit more deadly. Neither arquebuss, nor crossbow, nor sword is so terrible in its effects. With this phial in your hand you could make way for yourself amidst a hostile crowd. Now then if you wish me to apply a remedy to your case, you must first tell what you have done with the three drops which are wanting.”

“ I have dissolved them in a large quantity of water, prepared by Jehu—”

“ And do you suspect,” asked Ximeno, now satisfied, and not wishing to carry his curiosity any further, “ do you suspect that they have made you partake in too large doses of that water—which you doubtless wished to use as a medicament ?”

“ No ; I am certain that I have not partaken of it, unless indeed Jehu—”

Leonora paused.

“ How ! do you think Jehu capable— ?”

“ Oh !” exclaimed the Queen, recollecting the death of her brother Don Carlos, “ if he were well paid for it—”

"But who has any interest in your death?"

"Who has any interest in the inheritance of my crown?"

"A sad crown, indeed, Doña Leonora, a sad crown, which is scarcely warm yet upon your forehead, and nevertheless overwhelms you with care and anxiety!"

"Alphonso! Alphonso! the question now is not one of reigning but of living. I am poisoned, do you hear? I distrust every one, even my own physician, and I have placed my salvation in your hands."

"It is well, Señora, it is well; allow me to prepare the remedy; you have placed your life in my hands, and I must render an account of it to the Author of all created things. Meanwhile take care not to betray any apprehension, especially to Jehu. On the contrary, exhibit in his presence greater cheerfulness and affability than ever. It is necessary to be very prudent towards men who have such weapons in their possession," said Ximeno, taking the phial in his hands.

The Queen departed, and as if she understood the whole force and import of Ximeno's last words, she left the doors free, and ordered all the sentinels to retire.

CHAPTER VIII.

DON Luis de Beaumont had felt acutely the ~~hoax~~ which had been played him by the Agramontese; nevertheless he did his best to disguise his resentment, and availing himself of Leonora's offer, he went to court with his daughter, in order to regain what he had lost, by calling into exercise his talents as a courtier.

The enamoured Marshal, knowing that it was impossible for him to return to the arms of Catalina without first undoing the stratagem devised by Mosen Pierres, visited all the fortresses which were to be transferred to Don Luis de Beaumont, according to the marriage contract, and by employing persuasion and coaxing in some cases, and firmness and authority in others, he arranged in a few days that the castles should be placed at the count's disposal, the governors having bound themselves by a solemn

engagement in writing to deliver them up to the person whom the Marshal should point out.

Till then he had not ventured to present himself, nor even to write to Catalina. He felt ashamed and confounded because there was every appearance of his having committed a breach of faith; but the very day that he received the written engagement of the governors, and felt certain that the count's troops might take possession of the places of strength without meeting any resistance, he set off for the court with great secrecy, and went in disguise to the residence of the Count de Lerin.

Before announcing himself to the father of his beloved, he wished to ascertain what had taken place in his absence. By good luck he fell in with Maese Thomas de Galar, who was certainly very long-winded, but had the merit of leaving nothing unsaid, and even saying sometimes more than he was aware of.

The Marshal was greatly concerned to learn that Catalina did nothing but weep and sigh, that nothing could dispel her melancholy, and that she had taken ill the day after her arrival.

According to the major-domo's information, Catalina's illness, although it did not cause pain, nor oblige her to keep her bed, was wasting her away so fast that

she was already only the shadow of herself. Her father had called in the most famous physician in the kingdom, who had been in the service of the royal family for more than thirty years, had loaded him with gold, in order to make him take a livelier interest in the health of his daughter ; but, according to Thomas de Galar, the count would be ruined, and Catalina's health would profit nothing, because —

“ Why ?” asked Philip, endeavouring to conceal his deep emotion. “ Why ? do you think her malady deadly ?”

And he waited the major-domo's answer, as if he were an oracle.

“ No, Sir,” said Maese Thomas de Galar, “ I don't think she will die so easily ; but it is wrong in Christians to put themselves in the hands of these Jewish dogs who deny our Lord Jesus Christ, and above all I do not approve of heaping gold on them in such profusion, when to us poor sinners, a gold coin is a sight for sore eyes.”

“ But, Maese Thomas, do you know any faithful Christian who is as well acquainted with medicine as Jehu ? That is the point.”

“ Neither with medicine nor anything else, for it looks as if these dogs were not only sons of Satan but

had made a compact with their father—and yet there are Christians, for example Don Alphonso of Castille, who know more than the devil himself—and there is the Penitent who works miraculous cures, and there are many others who have charms which are good for all sorts of diseases."

These last words suggested an idea to the Marshal.

"Ha!" he said, "Maese Thomas, you put me in mind of a very excellent charm which I was taught by a nun who died in the odour of sanctity."

"Got from a nun?"

"An abbess, Maese Thomas, an abbess, and of the Huelgas of Burgos, no less; in the depth of her gratitude for a donation I made to the convent, she gave ample payment by teaching me this charm—"

"Ha! I told you that Christians have no need to go to Jewish doctors for advice."

"But this charm is not efficacious in all sorts of maladies; it is useful only for those which arise from some mental affection."

"Indeed? Well, that is precisely what ails Doña Catalina. A mental affection. I did not recollect; but that—Come, give me the charm—and I'll be off to the patient with it."

"I have not the charm with me, but you shall have

it in a few moments ; and assuredly, if you place it with all due secrecy in the hands of Catalina, in order that she may repeat it every morning before she has broken her fast, you will see her in a few days as beautiful, fresh, and healthy as ever."

The Marshal immediately withdrew in order to write as well as he could to Catalina, informing her of his arrival at Estella, of his desire to present himself to the count, that he might prove to him his innocence in regard to the deception practised on him in the matter of the fortresses ; and that he was now ready to fulfil all his engagements.

To this letter, which he delivered to the major-domo in the form of a charm, Catalina replied that he might visit her that same evening, as she had, like an obedient child, placed the letter in the hands of the count, from whom she had received permission to invite him.

From the count's palace, Philip proceeded to that of the Queen in search of Jehu.

The physician occupied a portion of the palace vaults : in the outer room he was wont to receive those who visited him ; no one had yet penetrated into the inner apartments, where he had his laboratory, and where he kept his treasures. The old man very fre-

quently disappeared for two or three days at a time ; sometimes he was thought dead, and a fruitless search made for him through his gloomy habitation ; at length he would come forth, driven by hunger, from his long confinement, with countenance emaciated, and pale as the gold he counted over and over again, and the suspicious, but at the same time satisfied eyes of the miser, who has the pride of a sultan, and the timidity of a slave.

The Marshal resorted to Jehu, hoping to receive from him some encouragement as to the state of Catalina's health, and as he knew him well, he took with him as much money and jewellery as he could lay his hands on.

Jehu had impoverished the Queen in order to administer poison to Catalina, and in order to cure her, he intended to exhaust the treasures of the Count de Lerin and the Marshal, and even, perhaps, the vaunted diamonds of Ximeno.

It was difficult, indeed, to keep on a good footing with persons who made so great sacrifices to obtain results so opposite ; but the venerable Jew was prudent enough to choose a middle course, which consisted in prolonging Catalina's disorder, until he had exhausted both parties.

Philip, after making his presents to the physician, was greatly delighted to hear the assurances he gave as to Catalina's recovery.

All the assurances in the world, however, were not enough for the enamoured cavalier.

After having consulted science, he next had recourse to religion ; and if in the former he met with selfishness, duplicity, and falsehood, in the latter he found truth, singleness of heart, and consolation.

From the royal palace, he repaired to the humble cottage of the Penitent.

Ines did not look on Philip as the person who had nearly killed Ximeno, as him, who had perhaps, by his hasty and imprudent conduct, caused all this confusion and mischief ; she regarded him merely as the distressed lover, asking for succour and consolation from the servant of God, for the idol of his heart ; and she resolved to comply with his request to the utmost of her power.

She undeceived him in the first place as to the nature of the malady which was undermining the health of the unhappy maiden, the innocent object of the Queen's wrath and envy, and then left the hermitage with Chafarote, recommending the Marshal to

wait there, whilst they were using their utmost exertions to provide a remedy for all.

It was not long before Chafarote returned. He came with gladness in his look, and panting as usual, from the haste with which he ascended the hill; and, with an almost royal gesture, he placed in Don Philip's hands the phial containing the antidote.

The Marshal, in a transport of joy and gratitude, embraced the hermit, and promised him a thousand rewards.

"Softly, Sir Knight," said Chafarote, with dignity, "for this action I ask no reward; it is enough for me to tell you, that you owe this medicine to the man whom you insulted and outraged in the Field of Truth."

"The adventurer of the Bárdenas?"

"Don Alphonso of Castille," answered Chafarote, unable to restrain himself, "or to speak more correctly Don Ximeno, prince of Naples and Arragon, natural son of Alphonso the Magnificent."

"The lover of Catalina?"

"No; the lover of Doña Blanca of Navarre; one, who after having loved her, is, I must tell you, incapable of loving any other woman in the same manner; one who loves Catalina as a daughter, and

the Penitent as a sister. Now I have let all out—but it is difficult to control oneself on certain occasions ; if you wish to show me any gratitude for what I have done this day, forget, I entreat you, all that I have just told you."

This was not easy for the Marshal of Navarre ; the words of the hermit had humiliated him. He left the hermitage, hanging his head with shame, and thinking of the means he should employ to repair his imprudent levity ; and that idea would have long kept him in a state of uneasiness, had it not given place to joy at the prospect of seeing Catalina again after so long an absence, and after so many events, and at being able to restore her again to health, and vindicate his own honour.

Let us return to the Count de Lerin, who was engaged in erecting the edifice of his favour at Court, on the ruins of his frustrated schemes.

Every day the Queen invited her illustrious relatives to dinner, and seemed all attention to Catalina.

The maiden of Lerin was tranquil in mind the first day, hoping to see appear, when least expected, the lover, who, under the royal auspices, was to lead her to the altar ; shame and natural timidity kept her silent and even reserved in her looks ; only she turned

her head furtively when she heard the echo of manly and sprightly footsteps in the royal apartments, and listened with the greatest attention, but with her head down, when Leonora and the count conversed together about the marriage.

Nevertheless the day passed in the most profound silence, the most complete ignorance, as regards the Marshal. She had not seen him in the palace, as she had expected, nor had she received any intimation from him. Her heart began to be ill at ease, with the presentiment of some calamity. In her countenance, but yesterday all placid and blooming, appeared the traces of that first anxiety. In her whole body she felt a discomfort which she had never before experienced, a kind of gnawing but slow disquietude which increased in proportion as the hours passed away in silence and solitude for the poor girl, who sighed for no other pastime than the sweet converse of Philip, no other society than that of her noble bridegroom.

Vain were Leonora's efforts to amuse her, although with the view of soothing her grief, she did not allow her to leave her side for a moment; Catalina's uneasiness gradually increased, her melancholy slowly undermined that rich and vigorous vitality which, fanned by the gentle breath of love, seemed incapable of decay.

The health and freshness of her virgin form were, it would seem, only spiritual, the reflex of the soul which shone in its strength and immaculate purity through the tender bark in which it was encased, although the first blight of sorrow caused the petals of the delicate flower to wither and fade.

Such were the conjectures of the Count de Lerin, such the judgment which might have been formed from appearances ; but the reader is already acquainted with the truth : it was not all anguish of mind, there was much also of physical suffering. All the blame could not be attributed to the noble and scrupulous Marshal, who did not venture to present himself to his beloved until he had repaired the fault which had been committed by his partisans ; much of the blame might be fairly laid to the charge of the implacable Leonora, who had within her palace at the same time the man she so passionately loved, and the beautiful and angelic maiden of whom she supposed him blindly enamoured.

Everything favoured Leonora's infamous designs ; even the absence, the supposed ingratitude of the Marshal, might be assigned as a sufficient cause of Catalina's declining health, although it was chiefly owing to the poison which was slowly but surely consuming her vitals.

After three banquets with the Queen, the death of the count's daughter would be inevitable, although it might be delayed.

It may easily be supposed that the Queen in such circumstances would show great affability to the Count de Lerin. She anxiously strove to conceal her crime under the dazzling cloak of favour. She could refuse nothing, and he did not scruple to ask everything; between the facility of the one, and the grasping cupidity of the other, the reader may easily imagine how the count thrived in the sunshine of the Court.

He was in the predicament of a petted and self-willed child, who, when brought to a toyshop, takes a fancy to everything, and cries and storms when he finds it impossible to take all with him; for the very abundance of desirable objects, and the facility in gratifying every wish, is fatal to selection.

At first he caught at the idea of marrying his daughter to the heir of the crown of Navarre, and he sounded Leonora on the subject; she did not manifest the slightest objection to the project, as she did not consider herself irrevocably compromised by any encouragement she might give to it; but Don Luis immediately abandoned the idea, well knowing that the throne of Navarre was in such a tottering state, that it

would inevitably tumble in ruins at a single frown from Ferdinand the Catholic.

He returned, therefore, to his old scheme of bestowing on the King of Arragon a crown, which was rolling, by the natural tendency of events, towards his august forehead.

For this purpose it was necessary that the count should enlarge his own possessions, and diminish those of his enemies. The Queen might concede to him certain taxes ; might grant him certain towns ; but while the Agramontese held his ancient castles, although he might be great, he could not be so powerful as he wished and required to be.

From the acute sense of his weakness, sprang with new force intense hatred to those who had brought him to such extremity.

To a cunning and artful man, there is no greater ignominy than to be beaten at his own weapons. The smart caused by the stratagem of the castles was now keener than ever ; the affront so great that it drove the colour from his face ; and as he thought the Marshal the author of his discomfiture, he cherished towards him the deepest hatred, the implacable rancour of wounded pride, although shame and envy were mingled with his antipathy.

In a state of mind so favourable for the happiness of his daughter, he was meditating one day in his castle at Estella, on the means of annihilating at once the insolent youth, by whom he had been so shamefully humiliated, when Catalina presented herself before him.

The noble maiden was leaning on the arm of one of her duennas, and had a paper in her hand.

Although her cheeks were pale and sunken, a ray of purest joy gleamed in her eyes, and a certain smile which had been long a stranger to her lips.

The count rose alarmed at seeing her out of her chamber ; Catalina, without uttering a single word, handed him the paper, while at the same time two tears rolled down her cheeks.

This was a manifestation of the joy with which her heart overflowed.

After causing his daughter to sit down, the count read the paper, which was conceived in these terms :

“ Catalina, I am worthy of you ; I can now go without shame into the presence of my bride ; urge for permission that we may meet ; when do you wish me to go ?”

“ He may come this evening,” said the count to his daughter, who, fixing her eyes on her father, endea-

voured to divine the impression which the letter produced on him.

“ Ah ! you will receive him then ?”

“ Yes, Catalina, yes ; I will receive him myself ; do not concern yourself about that,” replied the count, with a composed countenance, which left his daughter perfectly satisfied.

She kissed his hand with respect and affection, and accepted his arm in leaving the apartment.

Don Luis himself, notwithstanding his years, dictated the answer to the lover’s letter, delivered it himself to the major-domo, and not satisfied with all this solicitude, he set about preparing for the Marshal a reception worthy of the intense love he bore him.

With this view, he clothed himself again in his coat of mail, and took the famous dagger of Pampeluna. That weapon had not its blade mended, as when it belonged for a few hours to Don Philip of Navarre ; instead of repairing and soldering, the count had merely ordered it to be sharpened, which was done till its point became like that of an arrow.

He had also arranged, that as the Marshal proceeded through the castle, the doors should be closed behind him, one after the other, and that two squires should be stationed at each, so that the Marshal

might have no reason to complain that he was not well backed.

Having made these and other preparations, the count seated himself beside a table in a chamber through which Don Philip must necessarily pass, on his way to Catalina's apartments, and with his head buried in the furs of his ample tunic, his brows knit, and in a sullen attitude, one hand on the dagger, which was lying on the table, and the other supporting his cheek, he waited the appearance of the Marshal.

In order to fortify his mind in so terrible a situation, the old man conjured up all the injuries Philip had inflicted on him, and particularly the insult offered to him in the person of his friend, Carlos de Artieda, at the castle of Viana, the acquisition of which was of the highest importance to him, because it was the keystone of all his designs in regard to the Castilians.

He resolved, therefore, to put an end at once to the Agramontese chief; his favour with the Queen would shield him against the consequences of so horrible a crime. In order to perpetrate the deed, he chose his own house. Nowhere could the murderer be less concealed, but nowhere could the crime be palliated by a better excuse.

A feudal lord was sovereign on his estate, was abso-

lute and irresponsible master in his own house, and if this feudal lord was at the same time father of a family, and had a young and beautiful daughter, it is not difficult to imagine how much he would be justified by the laws, customs, and general opinion, for taking summary vengeance on a gallant and amorous youth.

Philip arrived at the count's palace, and in his eagerness to see Catalina, he asked only for her. The pages and squires who waited at the door, did not seem very willing to indulge him, in conformity with the instructions they had received from the count.

At length, after considerable altercation, they allowed him to ascend, as if they had yielded reluctantly to the impetuosity of the impatient youth.

The Marshal remarked that all the doors were closed behind him; but he showed no symptoms of fear, although he thought it strange that he should be received with such precautions; as if he were introduced by stealth into the house of her who was to be his wife within a few hours.

At length he entered suddenly into a chamber which was nearly dark, especially to eyes accustomed to the light of the other apartments.

Here he stopped, without knowing which way he should proceed.

The door of this room was closed after him, like all the rest.

Don Philip did not know what to think of all this mystery ; and his heart was now beginning to throb with apprehension, when he heard, amid the obscurity, some object moving, and then perceived a person of small dimensions, rise from a chair.

“ Don Luis ! ” exclaimed the Marshal, presuming that it was the count, from his small stature as well as his dress.

“ Ah ! Don Philip ! ” exclaimed the old Constable advancing towards his visitor with open arms.

When the Marshal, whose eye was now more used to the darkness, saw the count close up to him, he cast on him an uneasy and suspicious look ; but that look reassured him.

The count’s hands were empty, and there was no weapon suspended at his side.

By a reaction characteristic of the youthful and impetuous Philip, mistrust was instantly exchanged for abandonment, and suspicion for joy and cordiality.

He remembered in one moment all the faults which he had committed towards the count, and also those

which he had not committed, but which might, nevertheless, be imputed to him, and opening his arms he exclaimed :—

“ Ah ! cousin, accept my greeting.”

“ Take mine, and remember Viana, false knight !”* answered the count, when he held him in his embrace ; and then, with a rapid sleight, he drew the dagger from the left sleeve of his tunic, and planted it in the Marshal’s neck, just below the nape.

A horrible, inarticulate, piercing cry, issued from the lips of the youth, and reached the ears of Catalina, who was in her chamber, waiting her lover’s appearance, with impatient joy.

She rushed forth, crossed a corridor, and opened a door which gave light to the darkened chamber, in the middle of which stood her father’s avenging form, with the red smoking dagger in his hand, and Philip at his feet, weltering in his blood.

“ Unhappy man ! what have you done ?” exclaimed Catalina, throwing herself on her dying lover, and trying, as it were, to arrest his parting spirit with her looks.

* The actual words employed have been preserved by history :—

“ Ah, Señor primo ! A Dios !” said the Marshal.

“ Y a vos, y a Viana, mal caballero !” answered the Count.

" You come in time, Catalina," said Philip, with feeble accent ; " Catalina, you are poisoned—the Queen is killing you."

And then raising his hand to his doublet, he took from his breast a crystal phial and some papers, and giving the former to his beloved he added :—

" There, drink ; it is your only chance of salvation. It was Don Alphonso of Castille who gave it to me for you. Cousin," he continued, after a short pause, " these are the castles which were yours."

The count had not courage enough to stretch forth his hand. Catalina took the phial and the papers.

The phial she threw away with disdain, and it was smashed on the marble pavement ; the papers she tore into shreds, which strewed the floor, and were soaked in Philip's blood.

" Nothing, nothing without thee !" said Catalina, with firmness.

The count, filled with horror at the sight, withdrew without uttering a word.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE day of vengeance was drawing nigh.

While such dreadful events were taking place in the Count de Lerin's residence, others not less terrible, but more righteous, were preparing in the royal palace.

Ximeno, who had hesitated for a moment in his long-cherished resolution to execute signal vengeance for the crime committed against Blanca of Navarre, now felt his blood boil with indignation at finding complete evidence of the new assassination attempted by Leonora, who was still fearlessly pursuing her career of guilt and extermination.

Now in possession of the phial from which had flowed the poison administered to Catalina de Beaumont, and with all his doubts satisfied as to the authors and accomplices of the crime, he thought it necessary to remain in solitude, in order to deliberate on the mode and form of retribution.

He had promised to the Penitent to respect Leonora's life; but since that promise was given the Queen had, by a new crime, rendered herself worthy of a tremendous punishment: death alone could arrest her in her bloody career.

Ximeno was seated, with his head sunk in profound meditation.

He looked like a judge who, after having heard the culprit and the witnesses, and retired to commune in solitude with his memory and conscience, feels bound to pronounce sentence of death; and although the law is explicit, and the crime clearer than the light of day, meditates, ponders deeply, takes his pen a hundred times and shudders, and signs at length, after long hours of anxiety and toil.

He held in his hand the *corpus delicti*—the phial containing the liquid with which the Queen had poisoned Catalina. There had been taken from it three drops, which were sufficient, however much they might be diluted in other harmless substances, to send to her grave that angelic maiden, whose hand had never been stretched out but for the purpose of relieving distress, and whose countenance, a stranger to the dark shadows of guilt, had ever beamed with the heavenly light of hope and consolation.

"There must be no indulgence," said Ximeno, struggling with certain vague scruples of conscience, "there must be no mercy shown to such a monster. Why do I shrink? it is the duty of every man to exterminate her like a wild beast. Yes, your hour is come, Leonora; you shall die, you shall die by the poison which you gave to your brother and sister; you shall die by the poison you have given to Catalina; you shall die, perhaps, by the poison prepared by the same hands that prepared all your poisons. Carlos, Blanca, Catalina, I am about to avenge you; yes.—Perhaps I have delayed too long. If my hand had smitten this woman before now we should have to lament fewer victims."

Ximeno did not now appear a cold severe judge. The passions had tumultuously invaded that temple where alone the record of facts and the voice of the law should be allowed to penetrate.

"Unhappy woman!" he proceeded, "you have placed yourself in my hands; in flying from your pursuers you have come for refuge to the den of the tiger that was lying in wait for you for fifteen years. Unhappy woman! you think yourself poisoned because you have been a poisoner all your life; because you have that sentence engraved on your heart, which con-

demands us to die by the weapon with which we slay ! Yes, he who kills with the sword should die by the sword ; and he who poisons should die by poison. Ah ! Leonora, Leonora ! you have yourself pointed out to me your proper punishment. Yes, your death shall be that of Carlos the prince of Viana, that of Blanca of Navarre, and that which would have befallen Cata- lina, unless I had arrested you in your horrible career. Instead of giving you a remedy for this disease, which only exists in your own imagination, which is no- thing more than the offspring of remorse, I shall give you the real poison. Here, here I have it, prepared many years ago."

And as he uttered these words, he took from his ebony casket another phial containing a fluid as clear and crystalline as the first.

"Here it is, and so well measured, so well proportioned that, according to the drops I give you to drink, I can make you die at the moment that suits me ; and you shall die, you shall inevitably die on the same day, and at the same hour that your sister Doña Blanca died. My studies, my researches continued for fifteen years, have not been without avail. Leonora, Leonora, in like manner as God said to the sea, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' so I say to you,

' You shall not outlive the 12th day of February : fifteen years after the death of Blanca of Navarre, fifteen days after your brows have been girt with a diadem which has cost you so many crimes, and so many cares.' "

" You are very proud, Ximeno !" exclaimed a soft and well-known voice behind him.

" Ines !" replied the Infanzon, putting aside the crystal phial, as if he were trying to conceal some crime."

" God said to the sea, ' Thou shalt go no farther,' because God could also say to it, ' Advance and cover the world again ;' but how can you dare to set limits to the life of man, when you cannot prolong it ?"

Ximeno regarded her with awe and astonishment ; and, overwhelmed with the force and weight of that reflection, he cast down his eyes, and without knowing well what he was saying, asked :—

" Ines, were you listening to me ?"

" Yes : I came here to afford you my protection ; I have opened doors which were always closed ; I came noiselessly ; you were speaking aloud, in order to drown the voice of conscience. I overheard you ; and I now come only to strengthen the inward cry of your

soul. Do not listen to me, Ximeno ; listen to yourself."

" And must we pardon such a monster ?"

" Have you a right to absolve her, if God condemns her ?"

" No, no."

" Then, neither are you entitled to condemn her if God absolves her ?"

" But do you not know her new crimes ? Do you not know that she has compassed Catalina's death, as well as that of Blanca of Navarre ?"

" I know all, Ximeno ; be comforted, the designs of the wicked are not always successful ; Catalina is now saved ; I have myself seen the Marshal enter the count's palace, bearing with him the remedy which you gave to Chafarote."

" Oh ! blessed be God for permitting our timely intervention. But our solicitude, our successful exertions, do not extenuate Leonora's crime ; and God cannot suffer—"

" And what is man that he should interfere with the decrees of God ?"

" And do you come, after fifteen years, during which I have had no other desire, no other thought,—

do you now come to paralyse my resolution, to inspire me with doubt, to unnerve my arm?"

"Ah!" said the Penitent, "my voice has but small influence on your heart, as you know full well; but it is not the words of poor Ines that make you reflect, and arrest you [on the brink of the abyss into which you are about to throw yourself—it is the voice of your conscience—it is that of your guardian angel, whose voice is never more shrill and piercing than when the hand is uplifted for the commission of crime."

"Oh! you are right, Ines, you are right. I tried to confound myself with words, to evoke shadows, terrific phantoms, to renew my wounds, in order to exculpate myself in my own eyes; and nevertheless I trembled, and felt myself weak and prostrate. But, to have meditated a design for fifteen years, to have cherished it so long, to have lived only on the stimulus of that idea, and when the moment of execution arrives, to hesitate, and to think that cruel and unjust which I held to be right for so many years!"

"Such is man, Ximeno; he places his affections on some object, devoting to it all the tenderness of his heart, every moment of his life; for it he despises, forgets everything; and when the moment to gather

the fruit of so much love, so great self denial, arrives, he discovers that it is insipid or bitter, and that it did not deserve the slightest sacrifice, the least anxiety, a single sigh. Such is man; he builds up the structure of his ambition at the cost of his tranquillity and happiness; decks out the skeleton of human grandeur with all possible magnificence; and when he sits down to enjoy the gorgeous spectacle, he raises perchance a corner of the dazzling veil, and discovers the wretchedness and corruption concealed within; and reddening with shame, and justly incensed at the deceitful fabric, he deals it a kick, and in one moment the labour of a whole life falls in ruins. Ximeno, Ximeno, one can never know whether an edifice is defective, if it has blemishes or deformities, until it comes to be finished; when the scaffolding is removed, when we retire to sit down and view it at leisure from a distance, then, my friend, we may perceive that we have wasted time, patience, and money, on what is only deserving of contempt.”!

“ And shall the wicked smile, and turn the inaction of the good to their own profit? Are they to remain unpunished, enjoying the security derived from the uprightness of honest men?”

“ No, Ximeno; the smile of the wicked man is the

flash of the bolt which smites him. Leave him alone; life passes like a dream; he awakes on a bed of thorns, distress, and anguish: the good man, on a bed of unfading roses, and never-ending joys."

"And what am I to do?—what am I to do in the circumstances in which I am placed," asked Ximeno, at length vanquished by the Penitent's firm language, and persuasive tone.

"What are you to do? Like another Prometheus, you have dared to wrest the celestial bolt from the hands of God; well then, you must return to him the fire you have stolen. You are not the arbiter of Leonora's destiny, and yet you have attempted to deprive the Deity of his right to dispose of her; desist, then, from your schemes of vengeance; leave them in the hands of Providence, for, in the hands of Providence vengeance is purified, and converted into justice."

"After fifteen years!"

"After fifteen years you will have learned something that you did not know—that long-meditated vengeance—the best-concerted schemes of destruction, are either frustrated by the slightest accident, or perhaps by a sudden and unexpected impulse of the heart."

"But if I had not seen you, if you had come here an

hour later, Leonora would have presented herself, would have asked the remedy for her sufferings, and drunk this liquid in sufficient quantity to die on the tenth day of February—”

“No, Ximeno, when stretching forth your hand with the poison, Blanca would have appeared to you, and inspired you with horror at such perfidy.—You an assassin, Ximeno! you an assassin in order to avenge an assassination! Never, never!”

“Blanca, Blanca!” exclaimed Ximeno, raising his eyes with mingled awe and tenderness.

“Invoke her gentle and blessed name; invoke the memory of that angelic being. If Blanca now existed, if Blanca saw you with the poison in your hand, what would she do, Ximeno, what would she do?”

These last words made a deep impression on the mind of the Infanzon. He looked stedfastly at Ines for some time, as if undecided; then he took from his bosom the phials which he had concealed, went to the window, poured out the liquid they contained, and then threw them away; returning to Ines, who regarded him with unspeakable satisfaction.

“This is what Blanca would have done—my poor Blanca of Navarre!—in order to be revenged on her sister.”

Two big tears of joy trickled down the emaciated cheeks of the Penitent.

"Ximeno, Ximeno, I bless thee in her name."

"Now Ines," replied he, in a sad and solemn, but calm voice, "I thank you for the numberless favours I owe you. This last above all will be for ever engraven on my memory; you have prevented me from committing a crime. In consequence of the resolution I have just taken, my heart, oppressed for fifteen years, now beats calmly, and I at length breathe with freedom and comfort. Ines, I adore the hand of Providence—it is not given to me to avenge myself on Leonora, and I leave her punishment to heaven. My mission in the world is fulfilled—I cannot make you happy—I have nothing more to do with the Queen—I have torn Catalina from the jaws of death—Adieu, adieu, Ines! Adieu, my spouse! thou hast traced out the course I must pursue."

And as the Infanzon uttered these words, he took his cap, and without girding his sword, without looking back, he was preparing to depart.

"Where are you going, Ximeno?" said Ines, with deep emotion: "return—do not fly, like a coward, at the first discomfiture—much still remains for you to do.—Heaven, it is true, forbids you to attempt the life of

Leonora, but it commands you to continue beside her, in order to arrest her arm, which is not yet wearied with deeds of crime. You have pardoned the Queen, but not converted her. You have saved Catalina once, but you have not yet delivered her from all the dangers which threaten her. No, your mission is not yet fulfilled ; while Leonora is not powerless to do evil, or does not sincerely repent of her misdeeds, neither you nor I must quit her side."

"Ah ! " exclaimed Ximeno, "I wished to stop too soon. I know all that I must still suffer. In order to make Leonora as submissive to my will as a huntsman's dog—in order to convert her into my slave—I formed a certain design. Before leaving the hermitage, I told Samuel to come and see me."

"Samuel did come, but has never been able to get near you ; the strictest orders were given that no one should approach—but I—"

"On this occasion also, Ines, as on every other, you have anticipated my wishes ?"

"Yes, Ximeno—I was enabled to enter here by a secret door—Samuel is come with me—Samuel is here waiting your orders—"

"Oh ! how much do I owe to you, Ines !" exclaimed Ximeno, wondering at the depth of that woman's love.

“ To me nothing,” replied the Penitent, modestly. “ to God everything ; when man has the presumption to improve the decrees of Providence, all is error, contradiction, failure ; but when he places all in the hands of God, he carries his work to completion without trouble.”

“ Well, then, my friend, we have now formed our resolution ! Let God do as he thinks fit, but let us do what God wills.”

“ Right, Ximeno, I now recognise you by that noble and Christian resolve.”

“ I have still one doubt, Ines.”

“ Let me hear it.”

“ What does God require of us ? or rather, what is my duty at this moment ?”

“ To watch the Queen, not like the roaring lion of the abyss who seeks whom he may devour, but like the angel who is ever ready to arrest the hand which is stretched out to sacrifice some new victim.”

“ And will it be necessary to dissemble, Ines ? to play the hypocrite when I have no longer any thoughts of vengeance ?”

“ No more dissimulation ; the path of right is ever straight and clear ; the wisest policy is to have truth always on your lips, and you will find it produce



better results than your most deeply-laid schemes of deception."

"I had thought of that," said the Infanzon.

"And I also, since I come with Samuel."

"You come with Samuel, Ines! and do you not shrink?"

"No."

"And you say you are not vindictive?"

"It is not revenge that prompts me."

"And will not this chastisement be more terrible than death itself?"

"Death," answered Ines, solemnly, "is an example rather than a chastisement; it restrains others but does not correct him who undergoes it. Leonora has a hardened conscience, and in order that our words may produce a proper impression, they must be lofty and terrible. For that reason I first presented myself to her in a mysterious manner; for that reason when you reveal yourself you must reveal yourself entirely—"

"But if no one hears us, the chastisement will not be complete, and the lesson will be lost."

"We shall be heard by another person whom I have desired to come to these apartments."

"Who is it?"

"Mosen Pierres de Peralta."

"That will suffice."

"Yes, if there were many witnesses amendment would be hopeless."

"I am ready, Ines, I am ready."

"I hear footsteps," said the Penitent. "It is the Queen—Adieu, Ximeno—I will take care that Samuel shall enter when you require him."

Ines then opened a door perfectly concealed in the wall and disappeared from the gaze of the astonished Infanzon, after casting at him a parting look which gleamed with singular brightness, whether kindled at the flame of love or lighted up by a ray of the purest charity.

Ximeno was seized for a short time with a mortal stupor, but the Queen's approaching footsteps roused him from his trance.

"Oh heavens!" he exclaimed internally, "I have been rendered by two women as happy as mortal man can be—both sacrificed themselves for me—and nevertheless I have been the most unhappy of mankind. Oh! who can hope for felicity in this miserable world?"

Leonora presented herself to his view like the genius of evil whose sable wings had brought the scorching wind that blighted the blossoms of his happiness.

CHAPTER IX.

LEONORA came in great anxiety to receive the remedy for her ailments.

"Have you that?" she said, on entering, while she fixed her eyes with disquietude on Ximeno's sombre countenance.

He slightly raised his eyelids, and after regarding her with a look of melancholy indifference, answered with simplicity,

"That! and what is that?"

"The remedy, the antidote," answered Leonora, alarmed at such a cold reception.

"Ha! Yes; I did not recollect. No, Señora, I have it not."

"How! have you not been able to prepare it yet?"

"I have no thoughts of doing so, Señora."

The Queen looked at him intently, and with distorted countenance.

"No thoughts of doing so!" she cried ; "what! are you too going to desert me? Are you going to let me perish?"

"On the contrary I have never done more in defence of your life than at this moment."

"By leaving me to die! For heaven's sake explain to me this enigma."

"There is little explanation needed, Señora; the enigma consists in this, that you are not poisoned, and that being the case, the medicaments you would take might seriously injure your health.

A ray of inward light seemed at that instant to brighten up the clouded visage of the princess.

"That I am not poisoned! Nevertheless you told me here an hour ago that I had symptoms—"

"Well, then," answered Ximeno, interrupting her. "I have been thinking about you for an hour, and after deep meditation, conscientious duty compels me to tell you that the poison exists only in your own imagination—"

"And the pangs that I suffer?"

"And why, madam, do you attribute to poison the pains which you feel, and not to some other cause?"

"I cannot tell."

"You ought to know," answered Ximeno sternly.

“Do not receive me with bitter reproaches just at the moment when I was coming to give you greater and more signal proofs of my love.”

“I have now enough, Doña Leonora—”

“Yes, for you who are so lukewarm in your love, but I who cannot live without you, I who would have you always at my side, and make you great—”

“Make me great!” exclaimed Ximeno shrugging his shoulders incredulously, “and make me great by having me always at your side!”

“It seems to you impossible, does it not?” said the princess, smiling like one who has prepared a surprise.

“It seems to me useless.”

“Useless? No. If you but knew, Alphonso, the exertions, the cares, the sacrifices it has cost me to reign!”

“I think I have divined them.”

“And if you but knew how wretched a thing it is to reign as I do, to live as I do!”

“I can imagine it by your terrors, fancies, and suspicions. In short, Doña Leonora, you now know it, though rather late!”

“I thought I should be happy when I came to sit upon the throne, and the throne is a hindrance to my happiness; I thought I should be powerful, that I

should be able to take compensation for the time when I was obliged to submit to my father's caprices, and I am weaker than the humblest of my vassals. I mistrust all, I suspect all ; when my courtiers take my hand to kiss, I shudder, for there are poisons which kill by simple contact ; when they present me with a flower, I never smell it to enjoy its fragrance, for there are poisons which destroy life by inhalation. Although I long for the most savoury and skilfully-prepared viands, I never put them to my lips, until my servants have partaken of them. And that my mistrust may be universal, I mistrust myself when I think of you, and no one can despise me as much as I despise myself. And in return for such dreadful torments what do I enjoy ? Who reigns in Navarre ? Who rules in my kingdom ? All except myself, all—Mosen Pierres de Peralta, Philip of Navarre, Luis de Beaumont, all except the queen."

" I see that you are sufficiently miserable," said the Infanzon, softening his tone a little.

" Oh, but I cannot submit to this wretchedness ; I wish to escape from it, throw off this yoke, humble the pride of those vile bastards of the blood, subdue them, be queen, make them feel the weight of my sceptre ; and at the same time I wish to be sure of you, to have

you always at my side, to acknowledge my love to you before the world, and glory in it—”

“Enough, Madam, enough of your chimerical projects,” said Ximeno, dryly; “devise whatever means you think fit in order to bring the Count, the Marshal, and Mosen Pierres de Peralta into subjection, but I must inform you that I cannot long represent the part of Queen’s favourite. Hitherto, Leonora, I have lived outside the walls of your palace, but from the moment that you wish to detain me here—Enough, Madam, enough; let us not indulge in insane illusions.”

“All these difficulties will be removed if my idea is put in execution.”

“All?”

“Yes, all,” replied the Queen with firmness. The Infanzon was going to reply, shrugging his shoulders, “What does it concern me?” but he recollect ed at that moment that his mission was not yet accomplished, and that it was his duty to fathom all the designs of that woman, whom he could not look at without horror.

“Explain yourself, Madam, explain yourself,” he said to her, at length, with a gesture which seemed to be one of curiosity.

“You know already, Alphonso, that love and ambition are the two great wants I feel; to rule without

rivals, and to love you without a rival, would be to me the summit of felicity."

"But, that idea—"

"Before proceeding to explain it to you, and that you may understand it, I must impress you with the depth of my affection."

"But why, why?" asked Ximeno, interrupting her with that tone of indifference and even disgust which he had for some time adopted.

Leonora's extravagant passion, as well as her preoccupation of mind, seemed to have obscured her perceptions to such a degree that she did not observe the cold and disdainful tone of the Infanzon's answers.

"Why!" she said, "that you may excuse my boldness, that you may understand me—"

"Well, then, Madam, say what you choose—but say it quickly."

"In one word."

"I am all attention."

"Alphonso!"

"What?"

"I wish to marry you."

"Me! marry me!"

"Yes, I have said it, and I am decided, resolved."

"To be my wife?"

"To be your wife."

The proposal was such that Ximeno could not help shaking off his apathy.

"What!" he said to her "do you mean to abdicate?"

"Abdicate! abdicate what?"

"The crown."

The blood rushed suddenly to her face, and opening her inflamed eyes in terror, she exclaimed—

"I! I abdicate the throne after it has cost me so many cares and anxieties, so many apprehensions, so much gold, so much blood—That I will never do!"

"And did you ever imagine, Queen of Navarre," replied Ximeno, with disdain, "that I could consent to a clandestine marriage?"

"Clandestine! no."

"What do you mean, then?"

"A public and solemn marriage; I mean to make you king, Alphonso, king of Navarre; I wish you to sit on the throne as I do myself. Do you understand me now? You who eclipse all men by your valour and wisdom will give a *prestige* to the royal authority; you will surpass the Count de Lerin in sagacity, the Marshal in bravery, and Mosen Pierres de Peralta in severity. We should overthrow them one after another; their castles, their vassals would become ours. Without

you the throne of Navarre is lost, with you it is saved ; and when the throne is saved, and I receive from you in reality the power which I have now only in appearance, I would love you with all my heart and streugh ; I would live always with you ; I would not fear lest Catalina de Beaumont should deprive me of a single glance of yours ; and both as woman and queen I should be the happiest person on earth."

" But, Madam—are you mad ? I am a simple infanzon, one of your guardsmen. I married to you ! I seated with you on the throne !"

And Ximeno really regarded her with looks of astonishment, as if to discover in her some symptom of mental derangement.

" I was never more completely in my senses."

" I, an obscure individual !"

" For that very reason."

" A stranger !"

" Better still."

" A person whom no one knows !"

" So much the better, Alphonso, so much the better."

" Not even yourself."

" I do not know you, but I love you."

" Oh really, Madam, really I think you are distractred."

"Alphonso, my Alphonso! listen—come here—closer—that no one may hear us. It is a secret—a terrible mystery that I am going to reveal to you, and therefore I wished to disclose it in this apartment, where no one can hear us."

And as Leonora uttered these words, she looked round in all directions with a mixture of love, boldness, and suspicion, and taking the Infanzon firmly with spasmodic grasp, she led him close to the lattice.

A moment afterwards, when the Queen and Ximeno were conversing mysteriously in the embrasure of the window, the brocade curtains which concealed the principal door were gently moved, and the Count de Lerin cautiously peeped from behind. He had left his house, appalled at the death of the Marshal and the poisoning of Catalina.

The expression of his countenance was not that which was most habitual to it—cold, smiling, and at the same time malignant; it wore on the contrary a look of terror and revenge, presaging fatal and dreadful deeds; and as the count's hand rested at the time on the hilt of his dagger, there is no doubt that attitude corresponded instinctively to the thought which was uppermost in his mind.

Hurried away, in fact, by the first impulse of rage

and grief, at seeing his daughter's life in such imminent danger, he rushed forth from his palace in search of the poisoner, resolved not to return without remedy or revenge.

The squires had directed him to that apartment; and surprised at hearing the voice of Ximeno, he stopped at the threshold of the door, where he overheard several expressions, which restored to his countenance its habitual expression of cunning and malignity.

In the meanwhile, Leonora, placed within the ample recess of the window, was saying to the Infanzon, with agitated voice :

“ Now that no one hears us, listen, Alphonso,—you shall see, you shall see, how easily all that which appears to you to be illusion and madness, can be realised.”

Here the Queen stopped, making a second pause, as if what she was going to utter cost her a terrible effort, or as if she was seeking expressions commensurate to her ideas.

Ximeno thought that the mysterious revelation would never come, and said, impatiently :

“ Proceed, Madam, proceed.”

“ It is many years—many—fifteen at least, since

some documents came into my possession, regarding a certain youthful adventurer, who passed for the son of a Jew."

Ximeno had to repress a movement of surprise on hearing these words. He fixed his eye on Leonora, and remained perfectly tranquil.

"Continue," he said to her.

"This young adventurer, who fancied himself the descendant of that unclean race, was nothing less than a prince."

"A prince!"

"Yes; he was an illegitimate son of the king of Naples, Alphonso the Magnanimous."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ximeno, who felt the necessity of giving vent to his emotion in some way.

"Yes; immediately after his birth, he was carried away by a Jewess, called Rachel; he lived as a peasant among farmers; and when my sainted sister, Doña Blanca, was wandering a fugitive, and disguised in the dress of a rustic, this adventurer—"

"The prince?"

"Well, he fell desperately in love with her."

"And she?"

"My sister?"

"The princess."

"She also was captivated with the gallantry of the youth."

"Did you know this prince?"

"I only saw him once, for a few seconds, and then he had his visor down."

"His visor! did you not tell me that he was a peasant and a Jew, and—"

"The fact is, that he afterwards embraced our religion, and on account of certain exploits, the famous banditti of the Bárdenas chose him captain of their band, and then he entered the service of my father, as a captain of Free Companions."

"It is a curious story."

"This captain became the friend of my poor son, Gaston, heaven rest his soul! because he saved his life in some encounter, and he visited him at the castle of Orthez, where I had a lady called Ines, who also fell desperately in love with the adventurer."

"The prince?"

"Yes, the bastard prince. Ines was a woman of great energy of character; she loved him to distraction, and was jealous of my sister. Alphonso! she was jealous. Alphonso, I excuse her, if she committed deeds of madness, if she perpetrated the greatest crimes."

"Crimes!"

"Yes," answered the Queen, trembling.

"She?"

"Ines, Ines."

"Proceed, madam; for to be frank with you, I do not see what you are driving at, nor what this strange story has to do with our future marriage."

In the meantime, the Count de Lerin, who was deeply interested in this conversation, and not considering himself safe at the door, where he might be seen by any one who should come, glided with stealthy pace into the alcove, where he concealed himself behind the curtains, and continued to listen attentively.

"Did you hear footsteps?" asked the Queen.

"A mere fancy," answered Ximeno, thinking that Mosen Pierres de Peralta had arrived.

"Nevertheless—"

"I will go myself to see, and close the door," answered the Infanzon, who was anxious that none of the concealed spectators of that scene should be discovered.

He went accordingly, but there was no one to be seen; and in case Mosen Pierres should come afterwards, he left the door ajar.

"Speak, Madam," he said, returning to the embr-a-

sure of the window ; “ tell me what crimes Ines committed.”

“ She—she was,” exclaimed the Queen, with a confused voice—“ she was the poisoner of my sister, Doña Blanca. Jealousy ! Oh ! you do not know what a jealous woman is capable of.”

“ I see it now,” replied the Infanzon, with a sinister smile.

“ It was she also who took possession of the papers, proving the exalted birth of the adventurer.”

“ The prince ?”

“ Yes, the prince.”

“ Who was called—”

“ Ximeno.”

“ It is well to know it, that the story may be more easily understood.”

“ Ines was a great friend of Rachel, and managed to get Ximeno’s documents from the Jewess, and, prompted by rage and vexation, at seeing herself despised by her lover, she burned all those papers.”*

“ She ! she !”

“ Yes, she, who else do you think it could be ?”

“ So that the poor prince was reduced to the wretched condition of a Jew, because all the papers authenticating his birth, all, were given as a prey to the flames.”

“No.”

“How?”

“She who threw the papers —”

“Ines?”

“Well, she was too cautious to do that—she threw certain writings in the fire, in the presence of Ximeno, but as to the real documents, she said to herself, Who knows but they may be useful to me some day?”

“Ines, to be so deeply enamoured, and so jealous, seems to have reasoned and calculated very coolly. But, after all, was she right in her calculations?—Were these papers of any service to her?”

“Not to her, because—because she died soon after; but I —”

“Ha!—you have them?”

“I have them, I have them.”

“In your possession?”

“In my hand,” exclaimed Leonora, taking from her girdle a considerable packet of letters and certificates.

“Give me them,—they are mine, they are mine.”

And Ximeno snatched them from her hands, and rapidly and convulsively glanced over them one after another, muttering with quivering lip, “Oh, there is no doubt! there is no doubt!”

• And a gleam of ambition flashed across the Infanzon's brain, and dazzled him for an instant, but was quickly quenched in the dark depths of his heart.

"Why do you tremble, Alphonso? why do you tremble?"

"Why?—because I now thoroughly understand your idea."

"You understand it? Oh! will you tell me, now, that I am mad—that I am dreaming —?"

"I will not say so, because your intention is —"

"Have you not divined it?" replied the Queen, who felt a certain repugnance to explain herself distinctly.

"Yes; but —"

"You have the same, or nearly the same, age that that adventurer would now have."

"The same age with the prince, you mean."

"Well, then —"

"But is Ximeno dead?"

"I have no doubt he is."

"Well, I am of the same age;—what then?"

"You are a stranger, unknown; no one knows whence you came; I never heard you speak of your kindred —"

"I must confess to you, although you may regret it, .
that I am a bastard."

"Like him."

"Just like the prince."

"Oh! since it is the will of God that the resemblance should be so great —"

"It is still greater, madam, I am also descended from Jews —"

"A Jew, you a Jew!" exclaimed the Queen in alarm.

"A Jew, by descent, like the prince, but not of the Jewish faith; I have been baptized, Leonora, and I believe in Jesus Christ.—I believe in God, and now with a more living faith than ever."

The Queen remained pensive for a little, with her eyes fixed on the ground, but she suddenly raised her countenance, and said, in a resolute manner,—

"What does it matter that your origin is vile, if you disown it? It does not signify what you have been, if you are going to be another man. Providence has decreed that you should resemble somewhat the person you are going to represent."

"Providence, madam, has decreed that I should resemble more than somewhat; for I have not only the same age as Ximeno, but I am a bastard like

Ximeno, a Jew like Ximeno, an adventurer like Ximeno — ”

“ Heavens ! ”

“ A captain of banditti, like Ximeno—”

“ Enough—Enough ! ”

“ A captain of Free Lances, like Ximeno.”

“ Ha! ha! ha! you are jesting with me, are you not, Alphonso ? ” said Leonora, with a laugh that betrayed the anguish of her heart.

“ In love with Blanca, like Ximeno,” pursued the imperturbable Infanzon.

“ Good God ! what does this mean ? ”

“ Beloved of Blanca, like Ximeno ; beloved of Ines, like Ximeno ; and insulted by you, like Ximeno.”

Leonora was now unable to utter another word. She looked at him like a serpent crushed beneath the foot of a giant, and which rears its head, writhing and spitting impotent venom in its agony ; she tried to laugh, to curse, to take it as a joke, to kill with a look the man whose words tore her vitals, and she could do nothing, until at length a flood of tears came to her relief, and she exclaimed in a deep and piteous tone :

“ Alphonso, Alphonso ! ”

“ Ximeno, Ximeno ! ”

"It is impossible, it is impossible," said the Queen, sinking on her knees as if annihilated.

"Impossible! look at me well, madam; remember the day when a cavalier, also on his knees before you, also in tears, implored you not to utter a word which was about to pass your lips; that word was a calumny, a reproach, a horrible insult, and that you knew better than any one; you denounced me as base-born, a churl, a Jew, when you had in your possession, on your person perhaps, documents which proved me to be the son of a monarch; and there, in the presence of the principal cavaliers of Navarre, before Mosen Pierres de Peralta, and what was more cruel and painful, in the presence of the woman I loved, you spat in my face, you pitilessly trampled on me, you mercilessly affronted me, and such was the ignominy with which you overwhelmed me, that that angel of goodness, who witnessed my disgrace, my idolized Blanca, timidly withdrew from me her protecting wings."

"Ximeno, Ximeno!"

"Yes, I am Ximeno, come to tell you that Blanca of Navarre was poisoned by you—by you, and not by your lady, Ines of Aguilar; and if you dare to throw doubt upon this, I can produce your own declaration.



There it is ; do you see ? I am Ximeno, who, impelled by a mysterious fatality, or by the hand of Providence, slew unconsciously your son, Don Gaston, at the tourney of Libourne—here, here is the ring which your beloved son delivered to me the moment before he expired ! I am Ximeno, who, after watching you for fifteen years, have caused you to commit the same error at which you were so greatly scandalised in Blanca of Navarre—to love a plebeian, an unknown adventurer. I am Ximeno, who has patiently submitted to your detested caresses, because it was my wish to live beside you, that I might mar your happiness, defeat your plans, disturb the repose which you desired to obtain, not for the good of your people, but for selfish and interested purposes. I am Ximeno, who, though shut up in this gilded and brilliant prison, discovered that you were poisoning Catalina de Beaumont as you poisoned Blanca of Navarre, because she was beautiful, like Blanca ; virtuous, like Blanca ; because you fancied that she had, like Blanca, some affection for me ; yes, I discovered it, and, what is more, I had the good fortune to prevent the accomplishment of your murderous design. I am Ximeno, who, from this casket, out of which I have taken the justification of Ines, and the ring of Gaston, intended

also to produce a poison which I had prepared for you — ”

“ Ha !”

“ Yes, a poison by means of which you were to die on the twelfth day of February, the anniversary of Blanca’s death—fifteen years after her death, fifteen days after you first sat upon the throne which belonged to Blanca of Navarre.”

“ I poisoned—poisoned !”

“ No, I have had compassion on you ; death is more a warning to him that witnesses it, than a punishment to him who suffers it. I do not wish to resemble you ; I do not wish to destroy my enemy, I wish him to repent and live. At this moment you are feeling a weight, an oppression, an unutterable anguish, and this is because the hand of God is trying to constrain your heart, to force from you one tear of repentance ; at this moment heaven has opened, and your eyes have received new light, being now enabled to see clearly the enormity of your crimes ; at this moment—”

“ Enough, enough !” exclaimed Leonora, with faint voice, casting down her eyes, under the load of her horrible terrors and sufferings, but quickly raising them again, red and inflamed, but dry and daring.

"No, it is not enough : Queen of Navarre, you became enamoured of me in spite of my doubtful origin—in spite of my unknown name ; because, having these papers in your possession, you intended to ennable me, and exalt me into the royal family whenever it suited your purpose. Your love was not like that of Blanca, who thought me a peasant, and loved me in the full conviction that I could never doubt or deny my origin, whatever it might be ; that is to say, Señora, though it was a degradation for you to form an affection for an obscure and nameless person, you did not hesitate to commit that fault, because you could conceal it with a crime—by the usurpation of a name, an imposture, a robbery ; you did not scruple to be guilty of so base an act, because your baseness would not be known. You had not the courage to show yourself such as you are ; and preferred plunging deeper into depravity, rather than appear vicious ; while at the same time you thought I could be easily degraded so far as to become your accomplice. These papers were the polished slab of alabaster with which you meant to hide the foul corruption inclosed in the sepulchre of your breast. Oh ! it will not be as you think. Come, approach the chimney."

"What are you going to do?" asked the princess, in dismay.

"I have torn the mask from you, and it must never be worn again. To the flames, then, to the flames!"

"The papers!"

"Yes, the papers; all, all the papers."

"Impossible, impossible!"

"Wherefore?"

"Either prince or peasant; either king or nothing!"

Ximeno regarded her with an expression of profound contempt, and then, raising his eyes devoutly to Heaven, he answered her:—

"She is not now a princess—she is not now a woman; she is an angel in the enjoyment of God; and what can earthly glory or humiliation, life or death, concern me?"

"Alphonso, Alphonso! Prince of Naples!"

"How!" cried Ximeno, with a smile bitter as wormwood; "a Jew to Blanca, and a prince to you; disgraced with her, and exalted with you! Never!"

By the time he uttered these words, he was close to the chimney, to which he was followed by the Queen on her knees; and with a rapid gesture, which expressed at the same time the greatest indifference, he

consigned the papers to the flames, by which they were immediately consumed.

“I am lost!” exclaimed Leonora, “I am lost!”

At this moment, as if evoked from the shades of evening, which now began to darken the recesses of the apartment, there appeared a colossal figure, with pallid countenance and stern features, the head encircled with a white turban, and one arm bared, livid, and covered with leprosy.

It was Samuel, who approached silently, and suddenly presented himself to view amidst the ruddy blaze with which the room was lighted up by the conflagration of the documents.

“That man!” shrieked the Queen, assailed by new terrors; “who is he? whence does he come?”

“That man is my father!” said the Infanzon; “it is Samuel; it is the Jew who reared me at Mendavia; that is my father—the father of him whom you wished to espouse, and place upon the throne of Navarre!”

“Oh! what horror! Heaven chastises me. Oh! for pity’s sake, conceal him—be silent—let no one know. Do you want riches?—but no, you despise them, you will have none of them; dignities?—nor them neither!—my love, even after all you have said?—Oh! less than all. Oh! tell me what you want. I am a

queen. If you wish me to kill myself, to renounce my throne—tell me, tell me quickly, and you shall be obeyed. But, for the love of God, let no one know who you are ! let all be concealed.”

“ Ha ! pride, pride now. You are ashamed of having loved a Jew, an upright and honourable man, and think it no disgrace to wed a plebeian who would steal another’s name ; a title which did not belong to him. Leonora ! you do not know all ; you have not yet meditated the depths of divine justice ; he whom you see here, this Jew, whose presence fills you with terror, is, in the eyes of the vulgar, still more desppicable than a Jew.”

“ More ! more !”

“ He is a cagot, Leonora ; he is a cagot !”

“ Oh, mercy ! mercy !”

“ He is a cagot, but I embrace him, because he is my father. Do you see ? Henceforth the lover, the favourite, the future consort of the Queen of Navarre, is also a leper, a cagot. The son inherits the disease and ignominy of his father. You know the *fuero*, ‘ he who touches a leper becomes leprous.’ ”

The Queen remained motionless, on her knees, mute with horror and alarm, her arms extended, her eyes fixed, and opened so wide as almost to form a circle.

Not a cry, not a groan, escaped her lips. She seemed a monumental statue.

After a few moments of terrible silence, Leonora began to give signs of life by a slight nervous quivering which passed from her eyes to her lips, producing in the latter a kind of mechanical movement, as if she wished to force a smile. She did not, however, succeed, but a moment afterwards she burst into a loud laugh, and let a few words escape, which seemed like venom distilled from her wounded heart.

“ You have now said all!—I do not fear you,” she added, as she rose to her feet; “ you are mine, unhappy man! The secret which these walls have heard shall be buried within them. Fool! to make this scene as terrible as you imagined, you needed witnesses.”

“ Here is one!” exclaimed Pierres de Peralta, in a deeply-agitated voice, as he entered by the principal door of the apartment.

“ Oh heavens!” shrieked Leonora, in consternation.

“ Fear nothing, Madam; as a woman you inspire me with horror and contempt, as a queen you still command my respect and reverence. Fear nothing from me; I shall be dumb, dumb for ever; it is not you, however, but my country which has to thank this witness for his eternal silence.”

"Here is another!" exclaimed the Penitent, who made her appearance on the opposite side.

"Hell has vomited you forth!"

"You are blind, Queen of Navarre," answered Ines, "if you do not see here the hand of God. You need fear nothing from me, if you forget henceforward the functions of executioner for those of queen; if you cease doing evil to your enemies, in order to do good to your vassals. Fear nothing! God permits you to remain upon your throne, but bound hand and foot. God has placed two gulfs beneath the throne, the one of evil and the other of good; the latter is to be kept open, but the other shut, and you cannot raise the flag which covers it without the aid of my arm."

"And mine!" cried the Count de Lerin, sarcastically, as he issued from the alcove.

Leonora said nothing; she was suffocated with rage, vexation, and shame, but she cast at Ximeno oblique hyena glances, while he was beginning to feel compunction at the enormous retribution.

"Doña Leonora," pursued the Count de Lerin, "I am not come to tell you that you may live without fear, nor to be generous towards you; you have poisoned my daughter, and I am come to demand from you her

life ; your faction has despoiled me of twenty towns, and I come to claim them ; and remember, Doña Leonora, that I will neither forgive you the lightest sigh heaved by my poor Catalina, nor let you off till you have restored the last turret of my fortresses."

CHAPTER X.

MOSÉN Pierres de Peralta was the first to break silence.

“Sir Count,” he said to him, knitting his brows more than usual, “you well know that I heartily detest you, that I have employed, and will continue to employ every possible means in order to ruin you utterly and get you expelled from the kingdom, to whose peace and prosperity you are the only obstacle. You may also know, and if you don’t I must tell you now, that it was not my nephew, Don Philip of Navarre, who opposed the transference of the fortresses, who dismissed your messengers with muffled drums; it was I alone who dealt you that blow; and rather than give up to you one foot of ground, I would let myself be hacked in pieces.

Don Luis interrupted him with an impatient gesture, which meant, “What does all this concern me?”

He of Peralta understood it, and said, without pausing—

“ I am coming to that, Sir Count ; I know that you do not think of disputing the prize by open force ; you rely on your cunning and refined wickedness more than on the use of arms, and you do well, Sir Count. By such infamous means you will succeed better than by fighting nobly. Even now you did not hesitate between the dishonour of a woman, of a throne, of a dynasty, of a kingdom, and the recovery of some castles and fortresses, which you owe to the munificence of that very dynasty. The silence which the rest have generously offered you wish to sell. Well, then, though dear enough, I will buy it from you ; the castles are yours, and mine the glory of having saved the honour of the throne of Navarre.”

“ And my daughter ! ” exclaimed the Count de Lerin ; “ I will enter into no treaty till Catalina’s life is out of danger. Leonora, Leonora ! what have you done with my poor daughter ? She came to you healthy, cheerful, fresh, and blooming, and now she is sick, depressed, wan, and wasted. Oh ! restore her to me, with her lovely cheeks, her serene and placid eyes, her balmy breath. Restore her to me, Leonora, or I will declare aloud that you poisoned your brother and

sister as well as my daughter, and that God cannot permit one who is not only a murderer but a cagot to sit upon the throne of Navarre."

" Ah !"

" Yes, you are one, Doña Leonora. Yes, if your lover is a leper, you, who lived with him, who have kept him so long in your house, are also a cagot ! a cagot ! a cagot !"

It is impossible to describe the terror that these words produced in the mind of the Queen.

The Penitent hastened to say—

" Be composed, Señora, Catalina is saved."

" No, no !" answered the count ; " the liquid which was to cure her has not touched her lips."

" Heavens !" exclaimed Ximeno.

" She spilt it out."

A cry of terror proceeded simultaneously from all except Mosen Pierres de Peralta, who remained unmoved, as his sensibility did not go beyond the limits of his patriotism.

" Is there nothing left of the liquid ?" asked Ximeno.

" Not a drop."

" And without the remedy Catalina must perish ?" said Mosen Pierres.

“ Inevitably.”

“ And who can supply it ?”

“ No one in Navarre except Jehu.”

“ What Jehu ?”

“ The Queen’s physician.”

“ Let us find him immediately, Señora,” said Mosen Pierres to Leonora ; “ guide us to his laboratory.”

The Queen obeyed like an automaton. Behind her went the Count and Mosen Pierres.

The Penitent, Ximeno, and the cagot remained in the chamber.

“ Ines,” said the bastard prince, “ something serious and extraordinary must have occurred in the palace of the count.”

“ I divined your suspicion, and therefore remained here. Adieu, Ximeno, I fly to Catalina.”

And the Penitent disappeared by the secret door.

“ I wish you, father, to go and wait for me at the hermitage.”

Samuel accordingly departed.

“ Now I am alone, alone !” said Ximeno. “ I have broken all the links that bind me to the world. No, not all ! there is still one which death alone should break. I can still do some service for my fellow-creatures.”

And the leper prince set off in the track of the Queen and the two nobles, like an outcast dog, shunned by all on account of its unclean sores.

On the way, the Count de Lerin endeavoured to glean some information regarding the whereabouts of Jehu, whose scientific skill was now so much in request. Some of the servants had seen him descend to his subterranean abode after the visit which he had paid in the morning to Ximeno, and he was supposed to be still in his laboratory.

The hope of finding him quickly, and the certainty of obtaining the medicine when he was found, were the only gleams of comfort which reached on that stormy day the hearts of the three personages who first set off in the pursuit: by the salvation of Catalina the Queen would get rid of one of the deepest and most poignant stings of her remorse; the Count de Lerin would obtain all that he desired, and Mosen Pierres would see the monarchy of Sancho the Brave preserved safe and sound.

They descended in gloomy silence to the physician's den, without even looking at one another. The Queen first reached the entrance to the subterranean apartments, and rapped lightly, thinking the door was closed; the count came next, and waited for a reply,

but Mosen Pierres, who was the last, knocked again, and with so much force that the door, which was only ajar, turned upon its creaking hinges and dashed with a loud noise against the thick walls of a vaulted corridor.

"He is within," said he of Peralta.

"We would now require——" added the suspicious count.

"There is nothing to fear; we are rich enough," answered the former.

The Queen followed in silence.

The vaults which the Jew had chosen for his habitation as well as his laboratory were very spacious, and his visitors, therefore, were not surprised at the solitude and silence which reigned in them; they supposed that the mysterious Jehu, that man of destiny, who, like an infernal god, prepared in those awful abodes life or death for those who lived in the upper world, must dwell in the most secret and retired apartments.

One by one they examined those dreary and deserted chambers, destitute of ornaments and even of furniture, and only occupied by skeletons of all sorts of animals, heaps of shapeless stones, plants more or less dry and faded, phials, retorts, alembics, crucibles, tubes, and other instruments of a science which was at

that time occupied in the investigation of error, but which was gradually converted into a fruitful source of truth.

Nevertheless Jehu was nowhere to be found.

They explored those lonely regions again and again, calling aloud, and stopping to listen ; the echo repeated their words, but no one answered. They could not persuade themselves that the physician should have gone out without securing the door of his laboratory, but at length they became convinced of that sad truth. One consolation, however, remained to them ; the night was far advanced, and it was impossible that Jehu should long delay his coming.

They left two servants at the door, and the Queen and the two nobles ascended in order to make more minute inquiries regarding the Jew, who was searched for in a hundred places at the same time.

All the reports agreed, all the messengers confirmed one another : Jehu was nowhere to be found, Jehu must after all be in his cave.

The Count de Lerin descended again to the alchemist's subterranean domicile, but returned from the door, on being informed by the two lacqueys who kept sentry, that they had seen no one enter.

The mystery was incomprehensible, and, above all,

the torture endured was horrible ; moments fled—hours passed ; the poison was doing its fatal office in Catalina's vitals, and the only person who could provide a remedy was nowhere to be found. No one could tell where he was or what had become of him—Had the earth swallowed him up ?

This supposition, apparently extravagant, was nevertheless almost physically certain.

Our readers are already aware that Jehu kept his treasures carefully concealed in a chamber still deeper and more secret than his laboratory. This vault had no regular entrance, and it was necessary to descend into it by a trap-door which opened with a spring. It was by this means that Jehu used to visit his treasures, which he kept in an enormous iron chest.

The poisoning of Catalina had been a very lucrative business for him. To prepare the poison, the Queen had given all her diamonds, and, to administer it, gold without stint ; for the antidote he had also received gold and jewels from the count and the marshal ; the Jew's subterranean treasury could scarcely contain the waters of this inexhaustible Pactolus, which flowed with the violence of an overflowing torrent.

There was a man, however, who could dry it up with one word, as the Deity with his breath dried up

the waters of the deluge. That man was Ximeno. More sagacious than the Jew, he had dived into the secret of the Queen's diamonds, and might inform her of the robbery, as well as divulge the crime committed on Catalina de Beaumont. These premises were sufficient for the Jew to deduce the consequence that he must, at all hazards, find means of taking the life of a man who possessed such perilous secrets. He had, however, some difficulty in adopting this resolution. Ximeno knew the secret of manufacturing diamonds, and how could a miser renounce the probability of obtaining possession of that discovery?

Jehu kept all his riches carefully guarded, and he showed as much anxiety about concealing a single coin as a whole treasure; but the apprehension of losing a beloved object increases our affection for it, inspiring us with a desire to see, to gaze upon it, to assure ourselves of its possession, and the groundlessness of our fears and suspicions. The old Jew, therefore, descended to his laboratory after his interview with Ximeno, lighted a torch, opened the trap-door, raised the stone-slab, let it fall after him like a tomb-stone, and went down rapidly to the bottom of the vault. He had descended about twenty steps when he descried in a corner the precious iron chest, intact,

alone, in perfect preservation. He then raised his forehead, and cast upwards a look of joy and triumph, which ascended through the double tier of vaults as an insult to the busy, bustling world above, and to the Deity himself who hovers above all worlds.

He felt no doubt whatever that his treasures were perfectly secure from the moment he perceived the chest. It was constructed in such a way that any one who approached to apply a key to the lock, to lift the lid, or to place himself upon it, would be irresistibly seized between two iron arms, which sprang forth instantly and held him fast against the side of the chest. The Jew alone possessed the secret of opening it without exposing himself to such a danger, and therefore a distant glance was sufficient to tranquillize him ; the treasures it enclosed he knew to be safe. No one had profaned those hidden riches with covetous eyes, no one had diminished them even so much as by the friction of his hands.

For a moment he thought of returning back immediately, but he was so near those darling treasures, that he was seized with an intense longing to touch the gold, and count it, and to examine the lustre of his newly-acquired diamonds,—a longing such as that which the panting stag feels at the sight of a spring.

He flew to the chest, and with eager eyes, tremulous hands, and throbbing heart, fell upon his knees, and clasped it as ardently in his arms as the youthful lover embraces, for the first time, his future bride : with his lips on the cold surface, he remained for a considerable time in this posture, in speechless ecstacy. He then raised his forehead, which was bathed with perspiration, and touched the spring, in order to open the chest and gloat upon his wealth, when he suddenly felt a strange oppression on his back ; he attempted to stretch out his hand to remove that weight, that unknown obstacle, but could not roll it off. Then the physician imagined that the cold and damp of the vault had produced a paralytic attack, and tried to get up. In vain ; all in vain. Two iron arms enclasped him ; as if sensible of his caress, the chest had given him an embrace in return. He was caught in his own net ; he fell into the trap which he had prepared for others. Useless were all his efforts to extricate himself from those oppressive clamps by which he was closely fastened to his treasures. No one knew better than Jehu that there was no salvation for him, unless God sent some one to release him.

He thought at first that it was bodily weakness ; then he imagined that he had been surprised by

robbers during his trance, and he clasped the chest convulsively, as a mother presses a persecuted child to her bosom ; and the more he exerted himself, the more did the iron arms come forth, and chain him down more and more firmly, till he was almost suffocated. Then he discovered his situation, and uttering a fearful shriek, he swooned away with terror.

Many hours passed before he came to himself ; at length he gradually raised his eyelids—the torch had gone out—the darkness was complete. The Jew had no recollection of what had passed, but he felt the cold and well-known contact of the chest, and he knew that he was close to his riches, beside the delight of his heart, beside all that he held dear in the world.

He used to fall asleep, sometimes, beside his chest ; and he thought that this had been the case now. Amidst the darkness he saw the lustre of the diamonds, and the pale reflection of the gold ; but his lips were dry, his tongue cleaved to his palate, his mouth was hot and parched—he felt a horrible thirst, and he thought he must go up to the laboratory. Oh ! who can describe the shriek the old man uttered when he attempted to rise, and found himself fixed, crushed against the metal plate, doomed to die of thirst and hunger, beside those treasures which might have provided

food for entire armies. To find relief, he even licked from the iron the drops of perspiration which fell from his forehead ; and the coldness of the metal assuaged his thirst for a moment, only to irritate it more.

What frightful tortures did he suffer on account of those fatal treasures, which he had accumulated at the cost of so many privations and so many crimes ! For a cup of water he would have given the half of his diamonds. A cup of water ! The most glowing imagination cannot picture to itself richer, sweeter, more enchanting illusions than those which the old man saw through the glass of fresh, pure, crystal water. Translucent streamlets ; foaming cascades, which sprinkled their flowery margin with pearls, and were overhung with rainbows of the softest hues ; roaring torrents, grottoes, fountains, transparent rivers—the sea ! But it was a sea, black, deep, boundless : a sea, calm and terrible—fit emblem of the Deity ; it brought to his memory the crimes which he had committed —the black billows became red—the water was turned into blood ; and there floated Carlos the Prince of Viana ; Blanca of Navarre ; Catalina de Beaumont—pale spectres relieved against a tempestuous sky, furrowed at intervals by lightning, flashed, as the Jew fancied, from the eye of the Omnipotent.

But as the hours passed his hunger and thirst became more and more intolerable ; he thought the vault was filled with serpents which gnawed his vitals ; and to rid himself of those loathsome reptiles, he tore his breast with his nails ; and such was his thirst, that he greedily sucked the blood with which the tips of his fingers were besmeared. In the midst of his horrible sufferings, he once thought he heard footsteps over the slab which covered the entrance to the vault. Oh ! what a transport of joy did he feel ! He tried to shout, but his voice was hoarse, feeble, faint ; he could only produce an inarticulate bellowing noise, which died within those massive walls. There was no hope, no mercy ; and the Jew blasphemed, cursed God and man, gold and diamonds. Oh ! how many good works omitted, how many deeds of beneficence neglected, how many lost enjoyments were represented by that heap of valuables, which were not now worth a crumb of bread—a drop of water. But the tread of footsteps continued, with some intervals of silence ; Jehu knew that his abode had been invaded by persons who were in search of him, but who did not light upon the entrance to the vault—the spring of the slab. How dear did he now pay for his excessive precautions, his care, his watchfulness to preserve that heap of gold,

which he would have to abandon very soon. But the footsteps were succeeded by strokes—there was no doubt they were opening the entrance—they had heard the cries of the poor old man—they had taken compassion on him—they were now descending—they were at hand—the Queen—her squires—oh! he had now nothing to fear—he was saved, with all his treasures. The Jew now forgot all his dangers—all his tortures; his riches were saved, but they were discovered—they were exposed to the covetous eyes of strangers: oh! what a sorrowful embrace did the Jew now give to the chest so despised just before!

“No, there is nothing here,” he cried; “minerals—earth—for medicines. Nothing, nothing!” he said, making an effort to shout, and echo faintly repeated his last words, “Nothing, nothing!”

The wretched man paused to listen, holding in his breath; he turned his eyes towards the stair and—nothing! nothing!

It was all an illusion. Nothing more than hunger, thirst—a burning, devouring thirst which was not now contented with the blood derived from his lacerated breast, but sought a fountain in every finger which he gnawed and sucked—nothing, nothing!

Three days passed away; every exertion was made

to discover the Jew ; Catalina was gradually waning away like a neglected lamp ; Jehu was nowhere to be found, and no one could find a remedy for the Count de Lerin's daughter.

But what was most extraordinary of all, flashes of ominous light were seen issuing from Jehu's laboratory, and smoke from the chimney of his furnaces ; the squires placed at the door had not seen any one enter, and when they called aloud from the outside they received no answer from within. It was supposed that the devil and his imps, after having carried off bodily the Jewish physician, had taken possession of his utensils and skeletons, in order to concoct magic unguents for the fairies, hobgoblins, witches, and spectres ; and no human force or persuasion could induce any one to enter these unhallowed precincts guarded by superstition.

There was one woman, however, who ventured on that step in spite of such wide-spread and deep-rooted prejudices. The Penitent entered alone, calm and confident, and soon returned with a crystal phial in her hand.

“ There,” she said to the Count de Lerin, “ there is the most efficacious antidote for your daughter. Take it to her immediately, and if she has still a breath of life in her she is saved.”

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CHAPTER XI.

THE Queen was carried up from the Jew's subterraneous treasury in the arms of Ximeno and Ines as far as the door of the laboratory, where they were relieved by the servants, who conveyed her to her couch. She recovered from her swoon, rather in consequence of the severe pains she felt in her stomach than by virtue of the remedies which were administered to her.

When she found herself in her chamber, and remembered what had just occurred; when she felt the agonising pangs return with increased intensity, she entertained no doubt whatever but that she had been poisoned. She called Brianda, and gave orders to her that she should admit no one to her room—not even her own children, whom she thought so impatient to succeed to her inheritance, not even her physicians, who might have been gained over by her enemies, as Jehu had been bribed by her to poison Don Carlos

Brianda alone had the sad privilege of listening to her deep groans and piercing cries ; Brianda—but the Queen did not exempt Brianda from suspicion, and she did not allow any medicine, even a cup of water, to touch her lips until the duenna had drunk the half.

Leonora had taken care beforehand to provide herself with antidotes in case her dread of being poisoned should be realised ; but they were all exhausted in a very short time, with so little effect, that her pains, far from being assuaged, became more and more severe, her prostration more and more evident, till at length her wasted countenance began to darken with the shadows of death. Was it to be wondered at, if in addition to her bodily sufferings, she should be also afflicted with anguish of mind, and tormented by the appalling images which haunted her couch ; that her heart should be gnawed by remorse ; that no pleasing reminiscence gave a moment's respite to the great engine of torture by which at the same time all her limbs were racked externally, and all the faculties of her mind tortured internally ? When her lips were not breathing forth groans, or uttering imprecations, she dictated tyrannical orders of imprisonment, torture, and death against those whom she suspected for a

moment of being the authors or accomplices of the crime which had been perpetrated upon her.

Brianda did not even take the trouble of repeating these orders to the cavaliers who were waiting in the next apartment for news of Doña Leonora's health. Who would undertake to execute these decrees, hurled perhaps against those who had to put them in execution? Thus passed the first night, a cruel, interminable night of frightful, agonizing suffering. At length, a new day dawned, and the duenna soon perceived that it was impossible so shattered an existence should be protracted any longer. She opened the doors which led to the royal bed, but planted herself so as to check any tumult and confusion among those who should crowd in to see the dying Queen. But no one crossed the threshold of misfortune. Leonora's children were not in the kingdom; Mosen Pierres de Peralta, who was always anxious for the preservation of the monarchy, after having delivered up the fortresses to the Count de Lerin, departed, in order to bring to Navarre the youthful heir to the crown. Philip was dead; the rest were nobles, either too proud to submit long to the caprices and insults of the Queen, or courtiers who turned their backs on the sun which could no longer warm them.

Brianda waited for some time in vain ; no one entered, with the exception of a woman enveloped in a long black veil, who came with solemn pace, and silently approached Leonora's couch.

"Ines, Ines!" exclaimed the Queen, "are you come to triumph in my sufferings; are you come to insult me?"

"No," answered the Penitent, "you are alone, utterly abandoned ; the Count de Lerin, after having assassinated the Marshal, is endeavouring to conceal his death until he gets possession of his fortresses ; Mosen Pierres de Peralta, seeing that you could not live many days, has gone to Bearne for prince Febo, who is to succeed you, in order that the throne might not remain vacant a single day, and that your brother Ferdinand might not take advantage of the interregnum ; the gentlemen of the Court, shocked at your cries, threats, and imprecations, have fled from the palace ; and when all forsake you, I come to visit you, I come bringing you what you require—a physician and a confessor !

"A physician to poison me, and a confessor to curse me!"

"No," exclaimed Ximeno, who entered at that moment, "if I had poisoned you, you should never

have come to the throne, and I should not be so tranquil as you see me, regarding myself as I do, in the mirror of your misdeeds and chastisement. Leonora ! it is not the hand of man which kills you ; you are smitten by the bolt of divine justice. I can give you medicines which may mitigate your sufferings, but there is no efficacious remedy for your disease. I am only come to tell you that you have but a few hours to live. There is no salvation for you in this world, but here is a confessor through whom, perhaps, you may find salvation in the next."

And from behind Ximeno father Abarca stepped forward in his Benedictine garments.

" Oh ! is there no remedy for me then ?" exclaimed the Queen, with a look of dismay and confusion.

" None."

" And must I die within three weeks after being crowned ?"

The friar of Irache pricked up his ears on hearing these words, and said abruptly, as if he had just come out of a deep train of thought, " Not complete, Señora, not complete ; your Highness was crowned on the twenty-eighth day of January, a quarter to eleven in the forenoon, and this is the twelfth of February."

"Twelfth of February!" exclaimed the Queen in terror.

"Yes, Señora," replied the Chronicler, "so that this is the fifteenth day of your highness's reign."

The Queen changed countenance on hearing these words. She was still terrified, but her terror was not that of despair.

"Approach," she said to the Infanzon with sinking voice, "swear to me by the spirit of Doña Blanca of Navarre that I am dying a natural death, that I have not taken any poisonous substance."

"I swear it, Señora," replied Ximeno; "I swear by the soul of that angel who is now in the bosom of God, that it is an internal cancer and no poison which is destroying your life."

"Ximeno," pursued the Queen, sitting up in bed, "you wished to take vengeance on me, and God has avenged you much better than you could have wished. It is fifteen years this day since I killed my sister Doña Blanca of Navarre, and God kills me on the very anniversary of her death. God has permitted me to reign fifteen days, but during those fifteen days I have not passed a single decree as a sovereign. History will not record a single document bearing my signature as queen in my own right; I have conferred

no benefit on my people ; I have only been a queen in my horrible sufferings ; my reign will not pass into oblivion, but it will be only remembered with maledictions. God, God alone could have chastised me in so signal a manner !”

“ Señora,” exclaimed Ximeno, now softened, “ if this language is that of sincere repentance, may God forgive, as Doña Blanca of Navarre forgave you at her death—as I forgive you !”

“ As Ines de Aguilar also forgives you !” exclaimed the Penitent.

“ As Catalina de Beaumont forgives you !” repeated the daughter of the Count de Lerin, who had just entered, led by Brianda, and clothed in the sackcloth of a penitent. They all fell upon their knees ; the Queen was appalled at seeing the disfigured countenance of her last victim.

“ They are all better than I wish,” said the sick woman, with the despair of a reprobate.

The friar of Irache hinted to the others that they might retire, and he remained alone with the Queen.

When an hour had elapsed, Ximeno, who wondered that the priest did not make his appearance, looked in, and saw father Abarca with a pen in his hand.

“ What are you doing ?” he asked

“ Ah !” said the chronicler, looking as if taken by surprise, “ I was going to note the particulars as to the day and hour when Queen Leonora died, in order to complete my chronicle.”

“ What ! is she dead ?”

“ She died on the twelfth of February, at half an hour and a few minutes after three in the afternoon.”

“ Reverend father, since I figure as one of the principal characters in your history, it will not be amiss that you should read my memoirs.”

“ Amiss ! on the contrary, it will give me the greatest pleasure imaginable.”

“ Well, there they are,” added the Infanzon, producing a packet of papers, and delivering it to the historian ; “ this is the only thing further which I have to do for Blanca of Navarre.”

The friar rapidly glanced over the title which ran thus :

Memoirs of Don Ximeno of Naples, natural son of King Alphonso the Magnanimous.

“ Are you the person ?” exclaimed the friar.

“ In this book I am the lover of Blanca, and the prince of Naples ; here in Navarre I am a leper—in Granada, for which I am bound, I shall be a Christian soldier, who will very soon die in combat with the enemies of our blessed religion.”

When Ximeno came forth from the chamber of death he found Ines and Catalina embracing one another. They had both just adopted one and the same resolution—to enter together the convent of St. Jean de Pied le Port, where Doña Blanca of Navarre had resided.

Ximeno accompanied them until they were received into the monastery, and then bade adieu to those two angels, who promised to offer up unceasingly to God their joint prayers for his happiness.

“For my happiness!” answered the Infanzon, with a melancholy smile. “Yes, pray to Him above all not to delay my happiness much longer.”

And Ximeno disappeared in profound sadness, but without shedding a single tear.

It was not so with his faithful friend, Chafarote, whom he took with him rather as his companion in arms than his squire.

“Zounds!” exclaimed the ex-hermit, “that I should weep like a child, and a second time too, in your worship’s presence.”

“Stop till we engage in battle, and you will not be long in weeping a third time.”

“But would it not be well, Señor, before that happens, to take vengeance on the Count de Lerin,

who, after having caused your principal disasters, has, after all, obtained his ends in the matter of the fortresses?"

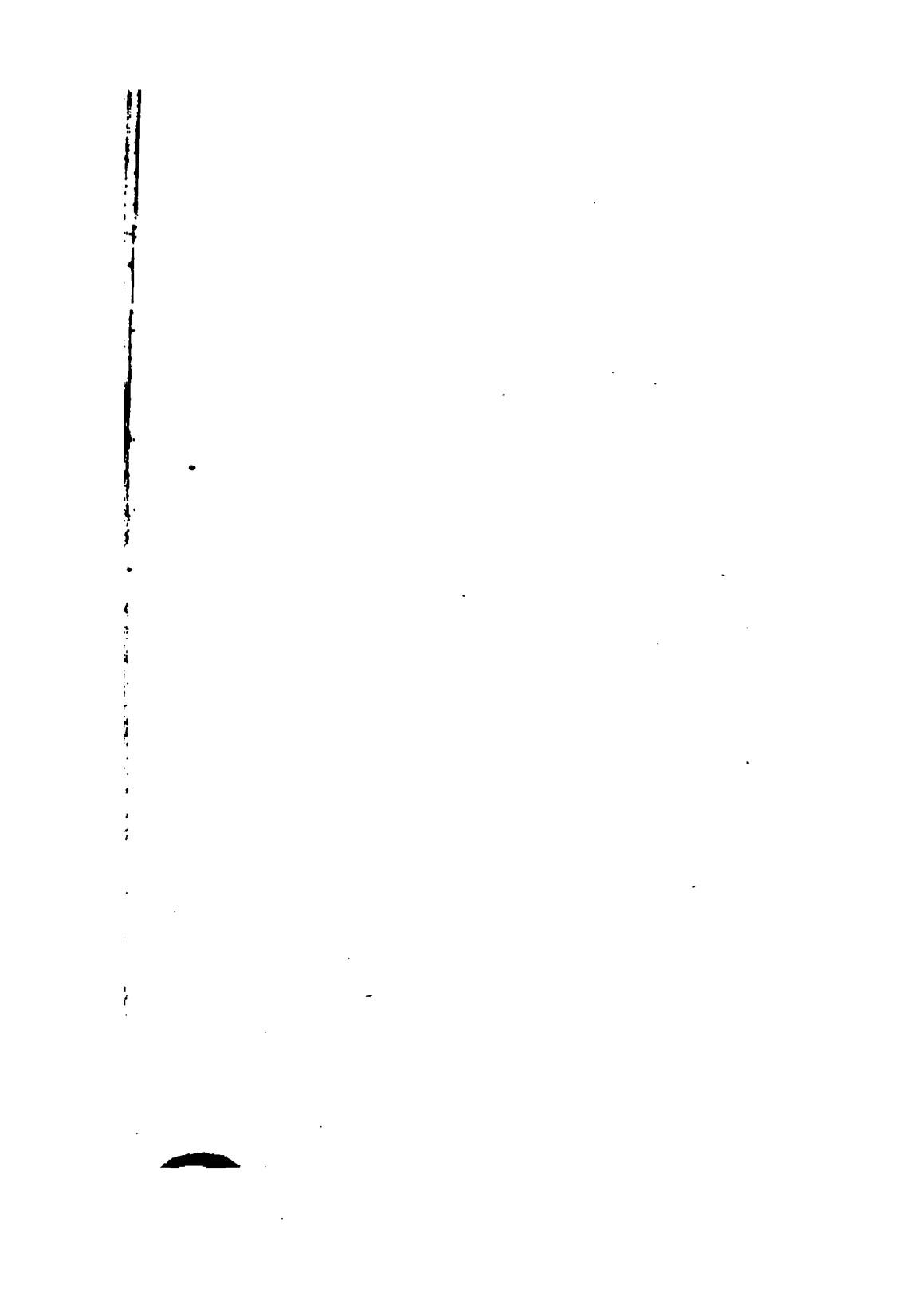
"Leave him alone, Marin; if there were perfect justice here below we should not need to seek it in heaven."

Ximeno and Chafarote accordingly repaired to the kingdom of Castille, after having taken up Samuel, who was in a short time restored to health.

The youthful monarch who succeeded Leonora, called *Febo*, on account of his singular beauty and grace, died three years afterwards. He was very fond of playing on the flute, and, on putting that instrument to his lips one day, he suddenly felt himself smitten with a deadly poison.

His sister Catherine, who was married to Juan Labrit, next occupied the throne. They did not die by poison, nor indeed was it necessary that they should, since they were driven from the throne by the troops of Ferdinand the Catholic, who had been invited to Navarre by the Count de Lerin.

A P P E N D I X.



L I F E
OF
DON CARLOS, PRINCE OF VIANA;

From Quintana's "Vidas de Espanoles Célebres."

THE scenes of crime and blood in which the personages figured whom we have hitherto described, were rendered somewhat less horrible by our admiration of their deeds, and the splendour, glory, and success of their career. It now falls to our lot to record crimes of equal, and even greater atrocity, while the painfulness of our task is aggravated by the spectacle of talents thrown away, the ties of blood basely and barbarously broken, virtue persecuted and sacrificed, and injustice triumphant; and our pen, when writing the life of the unfortunate Prince of Viana, unable to keep itself within the restraints of historical indifference, is bathed in tears, and our language tinged with the hues lent it by indignation and grief.

He was born at Peñafiel, on the 29th of May, 1421. His parents were Don Juan, the Infant of Arragon, and Doña Blanca, daughter and successor to Carlos III., King of Navarre, called, on account of the excellence of his character, *the Noble*. Castille was at that time the theatre of civil wars, kindled by the ambition

of the great nobles, who, seeing the weakness and incapacity of Juan II., strove to get possession of the government and administration. The Infant played a principal part in these dissensions, although he then favoured the party which had apparently most justice on its side, namely, that of the Court. Arragon was also plunged in a war, which King Alfonso waged for the purpose of obtaining the kingdom of Naples. France was torn with intestine divisions, and suffering from an English invasion. The small state of Navarre alone enjoyed profound peace, for which it was indebted to the prudence of its king, who had the skill to obtain the good will of the neighbouring powers, with which he avoided all collision. His grandson, Carlos, who was to be educated in Navarre, in accordance with the matrimonial contract between Doña Blanca and Don Juan, was taken there by his mother, and placed under the tutelage and guardianship of his grandfather. Although he was then but one year old, the king, who had centered in him all his hopes of succession, as well as of the happiness of the kingdom, resolved to recognise him as heir by a public mark of high distinction, and accordingly erected the district of Viana into a principality, in order that it might thenceforward constitute the title and patrimony of the first-born of the royal house of Navarre. This measure was approved at the general Cortes of the kingdom which were held at Olite (1422), and the child was, at the same time, solemnly sworn heir to the throne, and King of Navarre after the death of his grandfather and his mother, Doña Blanca.

But the excellent education he received was a still

greater, and more valuable gift than that of the principality. It was not completed, indeed, during the lifetime of the aged king, but it was carried out on the same plan by the prince's virtuous mother. Everything contributed to render it as perfect as possible ;—manly exercises, maxims of virtue, studies calculated to enrich his understanding and form his heart, and, above all, the spectacle of a kingdom enjoying peace and prosperity, under a wise and moderate administration. So much care and solicitude produced corresponding fruit in the great progress made by the prince, of which his conduct, as well as his writings, furnish a signal proof ; but the hopes which the people cherished of his future career, were doomed to shipwreck in the tempest of his misfortunes.

He was still very young when his grandfather died, but when his mother's death took place, he had attained the age of twenty-one (1442). She nominated him her universal heir in the states of Navarre and Nemours, as belonged to him by right, and as was stipulated in her marriage contract with Don Juan ; but she expressed a wish that before assuming the title of King, he would see fit to ask the blessing and consent of his father. Doña Blanca died in Castille, and during her absence, the prince was governor of the kingdom, an office in which he continued with the consent of Don Juan. His despatches at that time show that the prince, in conformity with the desire of his mother, styled himself Prince of Viana, heir-apparent, and Lieutenant of his father ; details which, although they may seem too trivial for history, are nevertheless necessary, for the justification of the Prince's conduct

in the divisions which afterwards arose ; showing, as they do, that his modesty and moderation were always equal to the justice of his cause.

Besides the Prince of Viana, Doña Blanca left at her death a daughter of her own name, who was married to Don Enrique, Prince of Asturias, and another called Leonora, who married Gaston, Count de Foix. Don Juan, the father of these three, had spent almost all the time of his married life amidst intestine wars in Castille, at which court he wished to rule alone. This he was at first enabled to do, when, in opposition to his own brother, he favoured the king's party ; but after the rise of Don Alvaro de Luna in power and favour, a man who yielded to no one at that epoch in valour, sagacity, and pride, the King of Navarre gained nothing but abhorrence in all quarters by his seditious machinations. The Castillians complained because he did not go and govern his own states, and the people of Navarre were indignant at being obliged to contribute to the carrying out of his schemes, although they were of no importance or utility to them. At the time of his queen's death, the civil war in Castille had somewhat abated, and Don Juan and his partisans had obtained the momentary triumph of driving Don Alvaro de Luna from the Court. For their greater security, the courtiers had all agreed to maintain equality of influence with the king ; a convention which was not only absurd in itself, and contrary to what each of them wished, but impossible to be observed, considering the weakness and fickleness of Juan II., who, was incapable of distributing favour with prudent impartiality. The King of Navarre observed

that the Admiral of Castille, Don Fadrique Enriquez, was gaining ground in the confidence of the King, and was stung with jealousy, as well as filled with apprehension, lest his ambitious schemes should be defeated by the return of Don Alvaro to power, and his junction with the Admiral; although the latter was a partisan of his own, he now looked upon him with the eyes of a disgraced courtier, and regarded him as a delinquent, because he was favoured by the monarch. The Count de Castro, a friend and great confidant of his, perceiving his displeasure, and that he harboured such thoughts, after showing him the injustice of his suspicions against the Admiral, who had always been faithful to him, told him, in order to set his mind completely at ease, that if he wished for perfect security, he ought to strengthen the ties which united him to the Admiral, and that, since Doña Blanca was dead, and Doña Juana Enriquez combined every quality that could be desired in such a connexion, he should ask her of her father in marriage, and in this way their friendship and alliance would be secured by an indissoluble bond.

The advice was no sooner given than it was put in execution; and a King of Navarre, who was at the same time Lieutenant for his brother in the dominions of Arragon, and heir presumptive to them, after playing the part of an intriguing courtier in the kingdom of Castille, sought in marriage the daughter of a private individual in order to advance the petty schemes of his low ambition. The marriage took place: but neither the Admiral nor Don Juan obtained from this connexion the fruits which they anticipated; for Don Alvaro de

Luna being restored to favour, and having received the support of the greater part of the nobility, was enabled to defeat the Infants of Arragon at the battle of Olmedo, where prince Henry was mortally wounded, and the King of Navarre obliged to seek safety in flight. In consequence of this heavy blow they lost at the same time their territory and their influence in Castille.

The Prince of Viana in the meanwhile governed the kingdom of Navarre, which now enjoyed the prosperity resulting from the wise and moderate principles established by Carlos the Noble. It was occasionally alarmed by sparks from the conflagration which raged in Castille, but they were soon extinguished; and although the King of Castille and his son Enrique invaded Navarre in the year 1451 with a powerful army and laid siege to Estella, the prince whose forces were incapable of offering any effectual resistance to those of Castille, adopted the resolution of going unarmed to the royal camp, where he appealed so persuasively to both father and son, showing them the injustice of their conduct after the long friendship which had subsisted between the two kingdoms, that, convinced by his arguments and moved by his eloquence, they raised the siege of Estella, and returned to Castille. There were some who suspected that this conciliatory conduct had a deeper political aim; and that Don Alvaro de Luna, desirous of putting an end to the continual attacks on his power by the King of Navarre, determined to give him wherewithal to occupy his mind in his own territories, and thus deprive him of the opportunity of coming to disturb those of others, and

that he was the means of forming a close friendship between the King and Prince of Castille and the Prince of Viana, inspiring the latter at the same time with distrust of his father, or encouraging the complaints for which he had just cause already.

The events which subsequently occurred give some probability to this supposition. The King of Navarre was in very bad odour with his own subjects ; it was they who were obliged to contribute the greater part of the funds necessary for putting in execution the designs of his turbulent genius ; they were subjected to the threats and even the blows of Castilian vengeance, and it seemed to them that they owed nothing to a king who sacrificed their interests as well as their repose in order to promote his own ambitious schemes in a neighbouring kingdom. They regretted that he had not, in conformity with the agreement formerly entered into between the royal personages themselves as well as with the kingdom, delivered up the supreme regal authority to his son, to whom it belonged by right, and who was now qualified not only by his age, but by his merits to occupy the throne ; finally they had taken it greatly amiss that he should have espoused the Admiral's daughter, without having communicated with his son or his people on the subject, and they murmured that they did not owe any respect or consideration to an alien king who had never shown any regard or affection for their country.

These embers of discontent assumed the force of a volcano, when his queen came to Navarre in 1452, with the title of governor, in order to exercise joint authority with the prince. " Wherefore," they said,

“does he send to rule over us a woman who is a stranger to us, and why does he offer such an affront to his son who has governed us so many years with so much prudence and success?” The queen, also, instead of gaining the affections of the people by the gentleness and affability so becoming in her sex, assumed an arrogance and haughtiness, always hateful and exasperating, but doubly so to the discontented, and her offensive manners completely exhausted their patience, and contributed greatly to fan the flame of sedition. There were two factions in Navarre, the Agramontese and Beamontese, which originally owed their existence to jealousy of court favour. All the authority and anxious care of Doña Blanca were unable to extinguish them during her government, and their dissensions burst forth with greater fury than ever, at the first symptom of division between father and son. Carlos' tutor and chief counsellor in his government was Don Juan de Beamonte, grand prior of Navarre, and brother of Don Luis, Count de Lerin and High Constable, who married a natural daughter of Carlos the Noble. These were the leaders of the Beamontese faction; while the Agramontese followed as their chief Don Pedro de Navarre, lord of Agramont and Marshal of the kingdom. The former declared for the prince, and the latter, in order to thwart them, espoused the cause of the king. In proof of this it is said that a short time before the rupture, as the prince was one day going out to the chase, he met Don Pedro de Navarre and his friend Pedro de Peralta; and they said to him, “We beg to let your Highness know that we recognise you as our king and master, as is right,

and as we are bound to do, and no one ought in this to think otherwise ; but if it be the case that the Constable and his brother are to rule over and persecute us, know that we have resolved to defend ourselves in the most honourable manner in our power, for it is not our intention to fail in our duty to your Highness, but to defend ourselves from our enemies, who try to undo us." To which the prince answered—" I do not think that the Constable and his brother meditate so much evil against you as you say ; do not think of such a thing, for God will provide a remedy for everything, and will so order matters that my father and I may know you are as faithful servants as it is your duty to be."

At length father and son came to an open rupture, the former wishing to maintain his sovereign authority in Navarre as before, and the latter to enter into possession of it as had been previously agreed upon. It is quite unnecessary to show which of them had the right ; but the prince would have acted more prudently if he had not resorted to arms in support of his cause, as this course had necessarily the appearance of irreverence, and involved all the evils and scandals of a civil war. The kings of Castille and Arragon might have been appointed mediators with full power and authority to adjust the differences between the disputants, and the prince might perhaps have acquired the authority to which he aspired without proceeding to the extreme measure of lifting his hand against his father. Their forces were very unequal ; for although the right-thinking people of Navarre were in favour of the prince, almost all the fortresses, and even the terri-

tory of Viana, were in the hands of the king, who after the death of his consort Doña Blanca, and still more after his second marriage, took good care to intrust the castles and governorships only to his most faithful adherents. If we add to this the advantage he derived, during the struggle, from his activity, his cunning, and the long experience of war which he had acquired amidst the disturbances in Castille, it may be clearly seen that the party which had justice on its side was not the strongest, nor likely to be successful.

The king refused to confirm the treaties which his son had entered into with Castille; and Carlos, whether he was tired of exercising subordinate authority, when he was entitled to wield the sovereign power, or whether he was carried away by the Beamontese party, gave the signal for war, and, with the aid of the Castillians, took Olite, Tafalla, Aivar, and Pampeluna. He then marched with his allies to besiege Estella, where his step-mother, the queen, was at the time. The king flew to her succour, assisted by the forces of Arragon, and relying on those which the Agramontese party had already prepared; but finding himself, nevertheless, not strong enough to risk an engagement, he returned to Arragon for reinforcements, leaving strong injunctions with his adherents to keep the enemy in occupation by skilful manœuvres. "Carlos was deceived," says Mariana, "by his own good, simple, and gentle disposition; he did not think that the king went away for the purpose of returning so quickly; he detested war, and perhaps he did not wish to excite the animosity of his people against him, by retaining the Castillian troops longer in Navarre."

The latter were persuaded by him to raise the siege, and return to Burgos, at the very time that the king, after assembling with incredible rapidity all the troops which he had in Arragon, returned to Navarre, and sat down before Aivar, for the purpose of taking it.

The prince hastened to relieve it, and fixed his camp within sight of his father's. The king wished to give battle immediately, in order to prevent the increase of the hostile army, which was constantly strengthened by the arrival of fresh companies. Both armies were drawn up in battle array, when a number of priests, impressed with the hateful nature of the contest, interfered, and, on this occasion, played a part well becoming their sacred office. By dint of entreaties, supplications, and admonitions, they succeeding in persuading the combatants to come to an agreement. The prince immediately gave a favourable ear to the proposal of a compromise, and suggested a treaty of peace on the following terms : viz.,—that the king should receive him and his partisans into his favour ; that he should also restore to him the principality of Viana, with its fortresses, and to his adherents the towns and villages which their adversaries had usurped ; that the prince should enjoy complete liberty, and be allowed to order his house as he thought fit ; that he should govern the kingdom, as he had hitherto done, during his father's absence ; that the latter should sanction the alliance made with Castille, and that time should be given him to inform the sovereign of that kingdom of this new arrangement.

These were not, certainly, the proposals of a rebel, since they allowed the father to retain the sovereign

authority, about which the contest had arisen. The king acceded to some of them, refused or modified others, and at length the prince, from love of peace, yielded in everything, and said that, if his father would receive him into his favour, he would return with all his adherents to obedience and submission. The treaty was signed by him first, and then by the king ; it was solemnly ratified, and in a few hours after the oaths were taken, the two armies engaged in battle. It is not known what was the cause of so sudden and scandalous a revolution ; although there is some probability in the suspicion of Aleson, who conjectures that, on account of the inveterate animosity which reigned between the two factions, some spark may have been accidentally struck out, and produced that conflagration, without either father or son having power to restrain it. For a long time the prince's troops had the advantage. His vanguard charged that of the king so furiously, that the latter, although composed of his best battallions, was obliged to yield. But, among others, it was accompanied by Rodrigo de Rebolledo, the king's great chamberlain, a man of extraordinary bravery, of which he had given proof on other occasions. He continued fighting, and the fugitives, moved by his example, regained their courage and returned to the combat. The Andalusian cavalry, which had come to the assistance of the prince, retreated before Rebolledo, and the former, seeing the victory wrested from his grasp, redoubled his feats of daring valour, and attacked, with those who accompanied him, the battalion in which his father fought. The latter was already hard-pressed, and very near falling

into the hands of the prince, when his natural son, Don Alonzo of Arragon, flew to his aid, and with thirty lances, attacking in flank the Beamontese, who fancied they were victorious, broke their ranks, and thus enabled the Royalists to overthrow them, and gain the victory. The prince, when urged to surrender, refused to do so except to his brother Alonzo, to whom he gave his sword and gauntlet, which the other alighted from his horse to receive, kissing at the same time the Prince's knee.

The father was so much irritated that he would not see his son, and the latter, on the other hand, was filled with apprehensions lest he should be poisoned ; and would not, therefore, touch a morsel of food, either in the camp, or in the castle of Tafalla, to which he was brought, unless it was first tasted by his brother. By means of this severity on the part of the father, and the prince's suspicions, the minds of both became more and more exasperated, and all means of reconciliation seemed impossible. It was a sign of those ferocious times that the world should be condemned to witness so often the spectacle of such parricidal wars. The Prince of Castille endeavoured to deprive his father by force of the supreme authority ; Charles, the French king, was at open strife with his son, afterwards Louis the Eleventh, and the battle of Aivar was fought within the circuit of Navarre.

After obtaining the victory, the king departed for Zaragoza, being deeply anxious as to the deliberations of the Cortes which were to be held there. Out of the number of those who attended, it was determined that forty deputies should be appointed for the purpose

of assisting in the despatch of the numerous and important affairs which were then going on—a resolution which was excessively annoying to Don Juan, because he well knew that this commission would present a formidable opposition to his ambitious designs. There was no subject more serious than the discord in Navarre, and the captivity of Don Carlos; his partisans far from being disheartened, seemed to derive new strength from their very indignation, and, assisted by the Prince of Asturias, they redoubled their exertions in extending the flame of civil war; they took forcible possession of several places, and attacked the frontier towns of Arragon. The King of Castille, on his side, also assumed a menacing attitude; so that the forty deputies set seriously about restoring concord in Navarre, in order to ward off the conflagration which was rapidly approaching themselves. Besides these political considerations, they were naturally influenced by commiseration for the rigorous confinement in which the prince was kept by his father. From the Castle of Tafalla he was transferred to that of Mallen, and thence to that of Monroy; but the rancorous suspicions of the king were everywhere alarmed as to the safe custody of his prisoner. The most moderate felt shocked, and murmured complaints at seeing a youth whose virtues and talents had given rise to high hopes of his future career, and who was not only Prince of Navarre in his own right, but the heir presumptive to the dominions of Arragon, transferred from prison to prison, like a vile criminal.

The first demonstration which the Forty made of their displeasure and their resolution, was to administer

an oath to the troops which they collected to defend the frontiers, that they would not assist the king in his opposition to his son ; " If you," they said to him, " as King of Navarre and Lieutenant of Arragon, carry on two wars, we do not wish to have more than one, and that with Castille is enough for us ; " and afterwards, on learning that all the forces of the latter kingdom were assembling, in order to enter Navarre, and support the Beumontese party, they drew up the articles of an agreement by which the prince was to be set at liberty, and his principality of Viana was to be delivered up to him, while he had to restore to his father the cities of Pampeluna and Olite, which had adhered to him ; the revenues of the kingdom were to be divided between both ; all their differences were to be referred to the King of Arragon, who was in Italy ; moreover, the prince was to have undivided authority in his own household, and an amnesty was to be mutually granted to the rival partisans.

The prince signed this convention. Although the king signed it he made limitations which were unpalatable to his son, such as that the latter was not to visit his uncle the King of Arragon without his father's permission, and that his household was to be composed of persons belonging to the Agramontese as well as the Beumontese faction. Don Juan thought that the Prince, in order to regain his liberty, would consent to any conditions, however hard they might be ; and Carlos, relying on the armaments which were going on in his favour in Castille, was desirous of obtaining better terms, even at the cost of some delay ; and thus time passed without anything being definitively settled.

Arragon saw its frontiers threatened : its absent king did not come to its rescue, and its deputies did not know what to do to extricate the kingdom from the disastrous conflict. They sent ambassadors to Pampeluna to treat of peace ; and that city answered that it did not take up arms for the injury of Arragon, but in defence of its prince whose liberty it sought, as well as his restoration to his government. The people of Navarre did more, inasmuch as they sent ambassadors to the Cortes of Arragon, to assure them of their pacific intentions, and to thank them for their kind exertions in behalf of the prince ; and they ordered that peace between the two kingdoms should be proclaimed in the towns on the frontiers.

The same city of Pampeluna, seeing that no progress was made in the affair of the prince, appointed a deputation of three influential persons, who should, through the intervention of the Cortes of Arragon, demand his liberation of the king. The latter could not any longer resist the united entreaties of the two kingdoms, aided by the force of circumstances : releasing his son, therefore, from his imprisonment in the fortress of Monroy, he brought him to Zaragoza, and delivered him up in the hall of the Cortes, on the 25th of January, one thousand four hundred and fifty-three. But the liberty granted him was not absolute ; Zaragoza was to be his prison, and two deputies of the Forty were appointed his custodiers. Thirty days were given for the settlement of the terms of agreement, a period which was not found to be sufficient for the arrangement of so many points as were brought into discussion, and which it was, therefore, necessary to prorogue

twice, the king always striving to make the terms of the convention more rigorous, and the prince only acceding to what he considered just. At length he obtained his liberty ; but the king received as hostages for the due fulfilment of the treaty, the Constable of Navarre and his two sons, Don Luis and Don Carlos de Beamonte, with other gentlemen of rank, who offered themselves for that purpose, in order to restore to freedom a prince whom they adored.

But, nevertheless, the war in Navarre was not terminated. Henry, the Prince of Asturias, who entertained a deadly hatred to King Juan, his father-in-law, declined entering into any arrangement, and remained constantly with his army on the frontiers of Castille, supplying the Beamontese faction with reinforcements. It was at this period also that he divorced his wife, Doña Blanca, and sent her back to her father, on the pretext that he was rendered impotent with her by means of sorcery ; but, in reality there was no other witchcraft necessary to produce that effect than the excessive indulgence in base and immoral pleasures by which he had injured his constitution in early youth. The unfortunate Princess was thrust from a bed which her virtues honoured, to make way for a successor in Juana of Portugal, whose imprudent conduct occasioned all the misfortunes of Henry the Fourth. Doña Blanca lived for some time in Arragon, and then went to Pampeluna to join her brother Don Carlos, to whom she was greatly attached ; indeed her affection for her brother was so offensive to their father that she thenceforth shared the hatred with which the king regarded his son. Discord, therefore, continued to rage in

Navarre, without any further intermission than the brief space of time during which a truce was agreed upon for the carrying on negotiations, which were never suspended. These were now conducted by Ferrer Lanuza, Chief Justice of Arragon, who was sent by the King of Navarre to the monarch of Castille, to settle the differences which existed between them, and by the Queen of Arragon whom her husband, Alfonso V., justly grieved at the evils with which Spain was afflicted, sent from Italy for the purpose of allaying them. Peace was at length arranged with Henry IV. who had just succeeded his father Juan II. of Castille, whose death occurred at this time ; but the dissensions in Navarre could not be appeased, the rancorous animosity of the two factions presenting an insuperable barrier to peace and concord ; and nothing further was accomplished than the obtainment of their consent to a truce for a year (1455), which, although it was not strictly observed, still prevented some effusion of blood.

But when this suspension of hostilities terminated, the war was renewed with greater fury than ever. The king was frantic with rage, because the fortresses had not been all surrendered which should have been delivered up to the Arragonese, according to the compact made at the time of the prince's liberation. He threatened to put to death the hostages whom he had still in his possession ; and the prince, in return, held out a similar menace with regard to some he had also in his power, belonging to cities which his partisans had taken ; among others that of Montreal. Don Carlos undoubtedly acted wrongly on this occasion, for

he failed to perform that to which he was bound by his own signature, and which had been promised by his plenipotentiaries. But he and his partisans knew well the disposition of the king, who shewed himself, during the whole course of the negotiations with the Queen of Arragon, harsh, inflexible, and unwilling to abate anything in his rigorous treatment of his son, or alter in the least his determination to reduce him to a complete nullity. At this period he carried his rage to such an extreme as to form an alliance with his son-in-law, the Count de Foix, by which the latter became bound to aid the king, with all his forces, and to enter Navarre and chastise the rebels, while the king, on his side, engaged to disinherit his children, Don Carlos and Doña Blanca, appointing the Count and Countess de Foix in their stead as his successors after his decease. Thus the insensate monarch disposed of an inheritance which did not belong to him, and conferred a right which he did not possess himself; and, adding barbarity to injustice, he bound himself never to become reconciled with or to forgive his son and daughter, although they should voluntarily submit and yield him obedience.

The count had now entered into Navarre with his troops, and having formed a junction with the royalists, struck terror into the partisans of the prince, who were not in numbers and strength sufficient to resist him. Valtierra, Cadreita, and Melida had been already besieged and had surrendered, Rada, famous for its fortress, razed to the ground; and Aivar also, which Carlos had recovered, was obliged to surrender to his stepmother, who laid siege to it in person. That kingdom, which had maintained itself in so tranquil and

flourishing a condition in the happy days of Carlos the Noble and Blanca, was now become a bloody theatre of pillage, violence, desolation, and slaughter,—the bitter fruits of civil war, the mainsprings of which are neither glory nor interest, but hatred and revenge. The count was urgent for the disinheriting of the prince and princess, and Don Juan had instructed his law officers to proceed against them for contumacy and rebellion. But the King of Arragon, indignant at the entry of the French into Spain, and displeased at the harshness and severity of his brother, sent to him requesting him to place in his hands the quarrel he had with his son, as the latter had done already, and threatening that if he refused to do so, he would deprive him of the government of the kingdom of Arragon, and would assist the cause of the prince to the utmost of his power. The King of Navarre dreading the execution of his brother's menace, suspended the suit commenced against his children. Don Carlos, feeling himself unable to contend with his father and his brother-in-law, who, it was thought, would be also assisted by the King of France, and not relying on the succours of the King of Castille, thought it his safest course to go and place himself in the hands of the conqueror of Naples and pacificator of Italy, who was at that time, on account of his exploits, his personal merits, and the magnificence of his Court, regarded as the first monarch in Europe.

Accordingly he set out for Italy through France (1457), leaving the government of that part of Navarre which adhered to him in the charge of Don Juan de Beaumont.

From Poictiers he sent to his uncle a secretary to inform him of the events which had recently occurred, in order that King Alfonso should, at his arrival, be prepossessed in his favour. In the letter which he gave to his messenger, to serve as his credentials, he said, "that he had twice or thrice sent persons to his father, beseeching him to regard him as a son, and to take compassion on the poor kingdom of Navarre, which had served him so well in former times; and that when matters were on the point of being arranged, the Count and Countess de Foix had prevented a settlement. Although," to use his own words, "it might have been hoped that they would have been favourable to such reconciliation, they prevented it, and have stirred up strife and evil between us to such a degree, that I have no hope of remedy, unless the mercy of God and the interposition of your authority and just influence over us extinguish this flame."

Not only had the Count and Countess de Foix done this mischief, but they also tried to turn against him Charles VII., King of France, to whom they accused him of having favoured the English at Bayonne, where some of his partisans were when the French obtained possession of it. By this means they sought to gain Charles over to their side. They urged him further to form an alliance with them and the King of Navarre, and to invade Guipúscoa, and keep in check the forces of the King of Castille, who was in league with the prince, and was preparing to give vigorous support to his party. Carlos, who had so many relations with the Court of France, as governor of Navarre and Duke of Nemours, proceeded to Paris, where he

was received by that monarch with every mark of honour and regard. He vindicated himself from the calumnies of his sister and brother-in-law, and dissuaded the king from coming to a rupture with Castille. Having done this good service to his country, he prepared to set out for Naples, whither he was invited by his uncle. It was his intention, if the latter denied him his favour, to pass his life in exile, in order that he might give no annoyance to his father, and avert, if possible, the horrors of civil war. In all the cities through which he passed he received the honours and applause arising from the reputation of his virtues and talents.

as well as from the interest inspired by his misfortunes. The supreme pontiff, Calixtus III., who was a Spaniard, gave him a very cordial reception at Rome : but, when requested by the prince, declined to interfere as mediator in his affairs. From that city Carlos departed for Naples by the Via Appia.

The King of Arragon received him with every demonstration of honour and affection. He reproved him, it is true, for resisting his father with arms, saying, that although right and justice were clearly on his side, he ought to have submitted, and obeyed him to whom he owed his existence, and that, by disseminating his wrongs, however just, he would have complied with both human and Divine laws. To this the prince replied, that his vassals and good friends had been greatly dissatisfied with his father's administration after the death of his mother, Doña Blanca, and that all were desirous that Don Juan should deliver up the kingdom to him, as he was bound to do by solemn contract, and as there could be no objection on

the score of age or capacity. He stated that he had shown a disposition to act conformably to his uncle's wish, and that matters would not have been carried to such extremes if the Admiral's daughter had not come to govern in such a way as to offend both him and the kingdom greatly ; that his vassals as well as himself regarded her interference in the administration as an affront and a slur on his reputation, which could not be overlooked. He concluded as follows :—" Pronounce, sire, whatever decision you think fit ; I only beg you to remember that all men are liable to error. We all have and commit faults. One sins in one thing and another in another. Have not the aged done in their youth things which their fathers disapproved ? Let my father, then, reflect that I am a youth, and that he himself was once young also."

With the exception of the above charge he only received favour and applause from the King of Naples. Although the ties of near relationship by which they were connected, and the circumstance of Don Carlos being heir presumptive to all the dominions of Arragon and Navarre, pleaded in his favour, the love for letters and improving studies by which he was distinguished, and had already become celebrated, would have been, doubtless, sufficient to give him authority and consideration in the eyes of Alfonso V. The passion of that king for learning and science is known to all, and he must therefore have esteemed his nephew much more highly than his brother, who had never done anything but intrigue, disturb, and destroy. He treated him, therefore as a son ; paid all the debts which he had contracted on his journey ; granted him

an allowance for his ordinary expenses : and both he and his son daily gave him new proofs of affection, in jewels, horses, and other presents, with which they vied with one another in loading him. Carlos wrote an account of all these particulars to his faithful city of Pampeluna, with all that exuberance of joy which the unfortunate feel when they see fortune begin for the first time to smile upon them. "Very soon," he said to them, "certain persons shall, if it be the will of God, go to Spain from our uncle the king, and arrange these matters properly ; and those who rejoice in our misfortunes shall not dance any longer to the same tune."

As soon as the favourable reception he met with at Naples was known in Spain, his father changed his tone, and began to give him, in his dispatches, the title of "illustrious prince, and my very dear and much-loved son," whereas he was formerly contented with calling him merely "the prince Don Carlos." But the Count and Countess of Foix, who were burning with desire to obtain the succession to Navarre, intrigued so successfully with the vindictive king, that he at length assembled the Cortes of his party at Estella (1457), and proceeded to the scandalous extremity of disinheriting Don Carlos and Doña Blanca, transferring the succession to his second daughter, the Countess de Foix, and through her to her husband ; an act which was essentially null as regarded the justice of the case, but which might in some measure disconcert the opposite party, deceiving the simple, discouraging the timid, and determining those who were wavering. But nevertheless, the partisans of the prince, and Don Juan de

Beaumont who was at their head, instead of being dismayed, opposed the king's act by another, which was doubtless more just, but, under the circumstances, was a rash proceeding. They convoked the Cortes of their faction, and proclaimed Don Carlos king, on the sixteenth day of March in the same year, swearing allegiance to him, and executing all the other legal formalities ; and thenceforward they always styled him king in the despatches which emanated from the governor and council.

King Juan was terribly indignant, and stigmatised as insulting and illegal a measure which he had himself provoked by his barbarous and unjust treatment of the prince ; and falsely attributing that bold and generous step to instructions which his son had left, his wrath and indignation against him were redoubled. He was found in this state of mind by Rodrigo Vidal, who was sent by his brother to arrange their differences ; and it may be presumed that it was not a favourable conjuncture for attaining the object of his mission. In the mean time the prince received notice of the proclamation, and he could give no other greater proof of his innocence than hasten to write to the governor, the council, and the chamber of deputies at Pampeluna, expressing the regret which their determination had caused him, and his solemn disapprobation of the act which was imputed to him. The letter which he then wrote is still extant, and it is throughout a convincing answer to the calumny which certain historians have since unjustly raised against him.

This was not the only step which the prince took in order to pave the way for peace and reconciliation.

He wrote also to his cousin, the King of Castille, to restore the castles and other places of strength delivered up to him by the Beamontese as security for the alliance and succours they asked of him at the time Count de Foix was making hostile preparations against them. But these measures, adopted from love of peace, did not prevent the prince from maintaining his rights with firmness when he saw that the abandonment of them would produce evil results. Thus, when the bishop of Pampeluna died, he recommended to the pope for that dignity Carlos de Beamonte, brother to the constable and the governor. His father had, however, been beforehand with him, and asked the bishopric for Martin de Amatriain, dean of Tudela, who was in Rome at the time, and the pontiff had complied with his request. The prince did not yield, well knowing that his father's intention was to place a bishop of his own party in Pampeluna ; and he accordingly made strong representations to the pope on the subject, for the purpose of inducing him to recall the appointment, while he refused to yield to the offers of submission which the newly-chosen bishop made to him from Rome ; and the pope at length, overcome by his urgent persuasion, and believing that Don Carlos would not have displayed so much firmness unless he had been backed by the king, his uncle, conferred the administration of the bishopric on the celebrated Cardinal Besarion.

All these occurrences kept alive the King of Navarre's resentment, which the concessions of the prince did not suffice to allay. Rodrigo Vidal, after having exhausted all the means of reconciliation which

his instructions recommended, proposed a suspension of hostilities between the two parties. The Beamontese acceded to the proposal, but the king was too arrogant and elated with his power to give his consent. Vidal next, thinking that his mission was to restore peace at any price, thought of other means of attaining it, more favourable to the king's party,—he proposed them to Beamonte the governor, who asked him if those terms had been offered with the sanction of the monarch of Arragon; Vidal answered in the negative, and then the prince's generous adherent replied, “I have no order from the prince except to obey what the King of Arragon commands; and since these conditions are different from those which he wishes, I and all of my party will rather run all risks to maintain our obedience than accept peace and tranquillity on such infamous terms.”

About this time (May, 1457) the kings of Navarre and Castille held a congress for the purpose of negotiating a peace between themselves. The Court of Navarre came to Corella, and that of Castille to Alfaro, to which town came also the Governor Beamonte, and proposed that all the places of strength in the kingdom, in the hands of either party, should be delivered up, in trust, to the King of Arragon, and that they should be occupied with garrisons and governors chosen and appointed by him, until he should pronounce the decision which was to put an end to those disturbances. King Juan also declined acceding to this arrangement, because he had well-grounded hopes of being able to gain over King Henry by his own exertions, as well by those which his consort

Doña Juana was employing with the Queen of Castille. The two queens visited and entertained one another ; and in the records of that time we read of the wonder excited in the prince's deputies by the luxury, riches, and extravagance which the Castilian ladies displayed. Accustomed to the modesty with which the queen, Doña Blanca, and Anne of Cleves, the prince's wife, were always dressed, they could not help wondering at the folly of the ladies who accompanied the Queen of Castille. "One wears a bonnet, another a carmagnole, one goes bareheaded, another with a hat, another again with a silk cap, another with a turban, another with a Biscay head-dress, and another with a kerchief; and there are some who wear daggers, others long knives, others cross-bow belts, others swords, and even lances and javelins, with Castillian cloaks ; altogether, sir, I have never seen such a variety of extraordinary costumes." Thus wrote to the prince his patrimonial procurator, Martin Irurita, who wound up as follows ;— "I do not well know, sir, what other news I can send from here, except that the land of the Biscayans submitted to your authority eight days ago, as well as all the highlands, except Gorriti, and your adherents are exerting themselves to the utmost ; but, God knows, sir, they are few and poor, and, in the long run, they will not be able to keep their ground."

It is not then to be wondered at that King Juan, elated with his preponderance, should reject every arrangement which should not completely humiliate his son. Besides the hopes he had formed from his own intercourse with the King of Castille, he also expected beneficial results from the suggestions of the Countess

de Foix, who was also present at the congress, and who would use every endeavour to prevent any agreement which might prejudice her designs on the much-coveted succession to the kingdom of Navarre. She was at that time suffering from an ailment which did not allow her to vie in splendour with the two queens, and which led Rodrigo Vidal to say facetiously in writing to the prince, "It is said, sir, that your sister, the Countess de Foix, is likely to lose an eye. But i'faith, sir, you ought to give yourself no concern about it, for one who tries to compass the ruin of such a brother, richly deserves to lose an eye, even a right eye. She is approaching rapidly, in consequence of hearing of these events, and to-day she must reach Tudela."

Thus, in Spain, everything conspired the ruin of the unfortunate Don Carlos. His party were losing heart; his father's was daily becoming stronger in Navarre; his nearest kindred fanned the flame, and his allies were forsaking him. But the King of Arragon thought that his authority would be compromised unless he compelled his brother to obedience, and therefore sent him new ambassadors who should make his wishes known to him, and force him to leave the affairs of Navarre to his decision. And, although he had hitherto resisted stoutly, because if he yielded his compact with the Count and Countess de Foix would be set aside, he was nevertheless obliged at length to succumb; and he signed, at the close of the year 1457, at Zaragoza, the deed by which he bound himself to place all his differences with his son in the hands of the king his brother. This put an end to the war in Navarre; and all the prisoners were set at

liberty. At the beginning of the following year King Juan withdrew the suits he had commenced against his son and daughter, with the proviso that if his brother did not pronounce sentence within the time specified, he might commence proceedings again—a condition dictated by animosity and bad faith, in order that he might not be without a pretext for persecuting them.

But the hopes which the Prince of Viana conceived from this treaty all vanished at the death of the King of Arragon, who died at Naples in June of the following year (1458). The conqueror of a kingdom which he rendered happy by the wisdom of his government; the pacifier of Italy, which was indebted to him for its repose; magnificent in his court, which was the most civilized and refined in Europe; passionately devoted to the cultivation of letters; a paternal monarch, a kind friend, and an amiable man; king, in short, of the kings of his time, he commanded the respect and conciliated the good will of all, and his death was an object of universal regret among nations as well as individuals. Italy and Spain lost at a very troublous time a moderator who, by his authority and the respect in which he was held, kept in check the restless ambition of the various factions by which those countries were agitated. But no one lost more than the Prince of Viana; his differences with his father were going to be adjusted, and from the affection the king his uncle bore him, there were grounds for hoping that his decision would be satisfactory to him, while the power and influence of the arbitrator secured the stability of the course which would be taken; and a term would at length be put to those scandalous dissensions, which did no honour to

his character for moderation, which had hitherto been attended with unfortunate results, and must ultimately lead not only to his own destruction but to that of his unhappy kingdom. How could he now, without exposing himself to the charge of madness, attempt to struggle with the power of his father, who was, by the death of his brother, sovereign of all the dominions of Arragon? And what hopes could he build on the protection of his cousin, the heir to the crown of Naples, whose power and influence were now so much inferior.

If the prince had been as ambitious as some pretend, the death of Alfonso presented him with a good opportunity, for many of the Neapolitan nobles and barons offered to proclaim him as their king because they did not wish to obey Ferdinand, who was the conqueror's natural son. It has been asserted that he gave ear to these suggestions, but that when he saw there was no probability of success, he immediately embarked for Sicily. But it is certain that the good understanding between him and his cousin was never interrupted, and that the latter punctually paid him while he lived the legacy of twelve thousand ducats annually, which the deceased king bequeathed him in his will. The love and respect which had been shown him by the people at Naples on account of his moderation, mildness, wisdom, and prudence, attended him in Sicily, where he also gained the affections of all; his father, who knew how much he was welcomed and beloved by the Sicilians might have then been induced to give up Navarre to him, and grant him his independence in order to get him out of that island. Now, what did the prince do to give rise to such odious

suspicious? He declared, at the Cortes of the kingdom, that he intended to submit to his father and yield him obedience; he declined the urgent offers which were made to him of the crown of Sicily; he punished three persons of importance who refused to pay him homage as the representative of his father, and he discountenanced the proceedings of the barons of Naples, who a second time invited him to become the sovereign of that kingdom. Occupied, moreover, in the study of the excellent books belonging to the Benedictine monks of Saint Placido of Messina, in composing sundry works in prose and verse, and in corresponding with the savants and scholars of his time, he only longed to enjoy repose after so many troubles, so much agitation, and to regain, if possible, his father's affection.

With this view he sent ambassadors for the purpose of sounding the king, giving him an account of his conduct, and negotiating a reconciliation. The king was well pleased that he should return to Spain, and Don Carlos accordingly set sail from Sicily in a squadron which was prepared for that purpose; he touched at Sardinia, (1459), where he was received with acclamations and respectful homage, as in Sicily; and he arrived at Majorca, where the royal palace was assigned him as his residence, and the fortress of the city was delivered up to him. The same was not done with that of Belver, although his father had offered to put him in possession of it; and this he regarded as an indication that the indulgence and friendship promised him were uncertain and suspicious. He at length wrote to the king a letter which has

been copied by all the annalists, and the substance of which was that he was ready to yield obedience to him, and surrender all the towns in Navarre which still held out for him, only he earnestly pleaded for liberty and amnesty to his partizans ; he also besought him to give an establishment to his sister, Doña Blanca, as well as himself, and proposed that he should appoint as governor of Navarre, an Arragonese, free from all passion or prejudice, in room of his sister Leonora ; finally he asked restitution of the principality of Viana and duchy of Gandia, the castles of which however should remain in the hands of the king for greater security. Among other arguments he brings forward one which would have softened any father but the prejudiced and vindictive Juan. “ Have no fear of me, Sir, for, leaving aside the reasons which God and nature dictate, I have now been so steeped in misfortune, so accustomed to disaster, that you may well place reliance on me.”

The King acceded to some of these conditions, altered others, and rejected several; but at length the agreement was concluded. The portion of Navarre which adhered to the prince was delivered up to the king, to the great disgust of the Beamontese, who were strongly opposed to that measure ; the Constable and other hostages were set at liberty, and their property was restored to them ; the revenues of the principality of Viana were also restored to the prince, but he was banished from the kingdoms of Navarre and Sicily, where his father did not wish him to reside. So great was his anxiety to effect a reconciliation with the king, that he sent to Navarre

for his two natural children, Philip and Anne, as well as for the princess Doña Blanca, a step which his friends regarded as imprudent, inasmuch as they thought that it was delivering them up to their enemies, by whom they would be involved in one common destruction.

He then set sail from Majorca and came to Catalonia; he did not think that it was necessary to give his father intimation before he went to place himself in his hands ; but the king took this step of the prince amiss, regarding it as an offence against his authority. He dreaded him wherever he might be ; he dreaded the correspondence which he kept up in Sicily, Naples, Spain, and France ; he dreaded the interest which his misfortunes inspired, the respect paid him for his virtues, and the prepossession in his favour produced by his amiable disposition and exemplary conduct. The noble qualities and high promise of Don Carlos, presented in the minds of the people a terrible contrast to the character of King Juan, a man of little or no virtue, now far advanced in years, led by a haughty and ambitious woman, who just because she had not the advantage of royal birth, insulted the people with a display of domineering, tyrannical authority. He arrived at Barcelona, the inhabitants of which wished to receive him in triumph ; he entered modestly, but he could not decline the illuminations, the acclamations, the rejoicings which the delight at seeing him called forth. They treated him with all the honours due to the heir apparent ; the king also took offence at this, and gave orders that until he declared him as such, they should offer to him no higher mark of

distinction than to his other children. The prince wished to have an interview alone with his stepmother, in order to settle all the points in dispute ; but she constantly refused, and came along with the king to see him at Barcelona, the prince going as far as Igualada to receive them. When they met, the prince threw himself at his father's feet, kissed his hand, begged forgiveness for all the past, and asked his blessing. He made similar demonstrations of reverence to the queen, who, as well as his father, responded by expressions of kindness and affection ; they then entered Barcelona together, where their presence and reconciliation were hailed with great public festivities.

But a grudge of so long duration, and which was kept alive by so many injuries, is not so easily forgotten, especially by the aggressor. All affection for his son was now extinguished in the king's heart : entirely given up to his wife, he lived only for her ; the queen detested the prince personally ; the interest of her son required his destruction, and her energetic and perverse mind did not scruple to adopt any means for accomplishing that end. What agreement, then, could be made — what reconciliation effected with any promise of stability or security ? It was proposed to marry the prince and confirm him in his rights and prerogatives as heir-apparent and successor to the crown. The king refused the latter, in spite of the entreaties of the states of Arragon and Catalonia, who thought that that was the most certain means of establishing peace and avoiding new disturbances. He was not, however, so much opposed to his mar-

riage, but he wished that he should espouse Catherine, sister to the king of Portugal. The prince consented to this match, seeing that his father desired it, although it would have been more to his interest as well as inclination to marry the sister of the monarch of Castille, a union which would have strengthened the bonds of his long alliance with that Court, and the protection which he had always found there. But the king and queen of Arragon wished Isabella for their son Ferdinand, and it must be confessed that that match, as regards the ages of the two princes, was more suitable than the marriage with Carlos, who was thirty years older than Doña Isabella. Entirely devoted to the negotiations for concluding the match with his younger son, Don Juan disregarded the marriage of the prince as a thing of little importance, and spurned the idea of declaring him his successor as if it were an injustice.

At this time the grandees of Castille, discontented with the government of Henry IV., combined for the purpose of reforming it, and, at the request of Admiral Enriquez, the King of Arragon became a member of their league. He hoped that he might recover, by means of the discontented, the extensive territories he had lost in that kingdom ; miserable infirmity of man ! not to rest satisfied with such extensive dominions and sovereignty as he possessed, but to try and overturn the rule of another in order to regain what he had forfeited by his own turbulence and agitation. Henry IV. and his ministers, who showed some sagacity on this occasion, endeavoured to conjure the storm that was brewing, by strengthening the alliance which he

had with the Prince of Viana, and by offering him the hand of the Infanta Doña Isabella. With this view they sent him an emissary who made this proposal to him secretly, and the prince lent a favourable ear to this new negotiation. It is not easy to determine now whether he should be blamed for imprudence, or commended for doing what was right and proper in listening to these overtures ; it would be necessary for that purpose to be acquainted with all the gossip, with all the words and actions which, although apparently indifferent, when carried from one party to another, and exaggerated by passion, give rise to suspicion, excite revenge or fear, and rekindle slumbering enmities. At all events the prince had, by the terms of his agreement with Don Juan, tied his own hands, and deprived himself of every resource, as he merely wished to obtain the prerogatives due to him as heir apparent and successor to his father ; and the king, by deferring the declaration of the prince's admission to such privileges, by delaying to grant him an establishment, and keeping him at a distance, betrayed a greater disposition to favour the designs of his enemies than to restore him to favour.

At this juncture the Cortes of Catalonia were held at Lérida, and those of Arragon at Fraga. The deputies of the latter kingdom had applied for permission to swear allegiance to the prince, but without success, when the Admiral of Castille, who came to make investigations regarding the secret treaty between his sovereign and the Prince of Viana, informed the king and queen of Arragon of the whole affair. It is said that Don Juan would not at first give credence to the

information, and that he did not believe it until the queen confirmed it, weeping and bewailing her evil destiny. The consent and even the authorization which the king had given for the negotiation of a marriage between Don Carlos and the Infanta of Portugal might have been a sufficient ground for his incredulity. Regarding himself, then, as having been deceived, and viewing his son's language as treacherous, he determined to arrest him, and sent for him to come to Lérida, where the Cortes of Catalonia were then sitting. They were very soon to close; and the prince, seeing that there was nothing said about declaring him successor to the throne, was overwhelmed with dejection and despair, as if he foreboded what was about to befall him. Many of his friends and advisers warned him not to go there, and place himself in the hands of his unrelenting enemies. His physician said to him frankly, "Señor, if you are taken prisoner, be assured that you are a dead man, for your father will only place you in captivity for the purpose of taking away your life; and although they taste your food before you touch it, they will contrive to give you something which will send you to the other world." Some thought that he should fly to Sicily, others to Castille; in short, there were all sorts of proposals and projects, and the unhappy prince, who was in a state of extreme destitution, was obliged to apply for pecuniary aid to several towns of Catalonia. At length he resolved to obey his father, relying on the guarantee of the Cortes. He repaired to Lérida, and the next day, when the sittings of the Cortes were over, he presented himself before his father. The king gave him

his hand and kissed him, as was the custom at that time, and immediately ordered him to be arrested. On hearing this terrible mandate, the prince threw himself at his feet, and said to him, "Oh, father ! what becomes of the assurance of safety you gave me when you invited me to come from Majorca ? Where is the royal safeguard which all who come to the Cortes enjoy by public right ? Where is your clemency ? What does it signify to be honoured with the paternal kiss, if I am to be then made prisoner ? God is my witness that I have neither undertaken nor imagined anything against your person. Ah, Señor ! do not think of taking vengeance on your own flesh and blood." To these he added other arguments and entreaties which the king heard without relenting ; and he was delivered up to those who were intrusted with his custody.

At the unexpected news of his arrest all Lérida was in commotion, as if it were suddenly attacked by an army. At first they were astonished and confounded ; they did not know what to think or believe, and wondered whether there had been a conspiracy against the king ; but when they were certain of the truth, and had learned the motives and circumstances of the startling event, their minds were turned to pity, and they began loudly to extol the prince's virtues, to bewail his misfortunes, and to revile his father for his inhuman persecution. The deputies of the Cortes of Catalonia waited on the king, and reminded him of the security given by the Cortes ; they requested that Carlos should be delivered up to them, offering to be guarantees for his safe custody, as well as to pay a

hundred thousand florins to the king for this indulgence. The Cortes of Arragon, which were then sitting at Fraga, also sent a deputation entreating the king to show clemency towards his son, and setting forth the interest which the whole kingdom took in his liberty and safety ; they also begged that the prince might be given up to them, and offered to comply with the demands which the king had made on them. The monarch harshly refused to make any agreement ; however, it was conceded as a great favour to the prince that he should be removed to Fraga from Aytona, where he had been imprisoned ; but in return he was obliged to renounce all the liberties and fueros of Arragon, and the king gave him to understand that this indulgence was granted him at the desire of his stepmother, the queen.

In the meantime Don Juan ordered that the suit which he had formerly begun against him should be renewed. The prince was accused by his enemies of plotting against his father's life with the factious and discontented throughout his dominions ; of having made secret arrangements for going to Castille, from which troops had come to the frontier to receive him ; and they spoke of a letter from him to Henry IV., which contained the evidence of this horrible conspiracy. But as there was no such letter in existence, its invention having been solely due to the rancorous hatred of his persecutors, they resorted to proofs of a different kind. At the same time with the prince was likewise arrested, his intimate friend and counsellor Don Juan de Beamonte, prior of Navarre, who had defended the interests of Don Carlos with so much

heroism and constancy during the civil war. He was conveyed to the fortress of Azcon, where he was treated with the utmost rigour, and questioned as to the heads of accusation against his master. He was horror-struck at hearing the charge of parricide ; and although he admitted the different propositions between which the prince wavered, Don Carlos' mind having been alarmed by the suspicions and danger which the rigorous conduct of his father betrayed, he maintained that the sole aim of such propositions was the security of his person, and nothing was ever projected to the prejudice of the king or the state. These declarations did not satisfy or appease the king's anger ; and the prince was transferred from Aytona to Zaragoza, then to Miravet, and afterwards to Morella, where the King at length thought the strength of the place was a sufficient security for the safe keeping of his prisoner.

When the Catalans saw the king's disregard for the representations made by the Cortes at Lérida, they agreed to form a council of twenty-seven persons who should, in conjunction with the deputies of the Cortes, arrange all the acts and proceedings in reference to this affair, and sent to the king a deputation of twelve delegates, at the head of whom was the Archbishop of Tarragona. That prelate besought the king to exercise clemency ; represented to him the evils which a rejection of their application would occasion, the mischievous impression which his severity would produce in the minds of the people, who were all persuaded of the prince's innocence, and reminded him of his duty to maintain among them the peace which had

been bequeathed by his predecessors. The king answered that it was the prince's acts of disobedience, and not any feeling of personal hatred or anger, which had obliged him to keep him in prison ; that the prince was continually plotting against his person and authority ; that his greatest desire was to take away his father's life ; that he had conspired with the King of Castille against his crown, and as he said this he cursed the hour in which he begot him. When the council of seven-and-twenty saw how ineffectual was their embassy, they put all Barcelona under arms, and sent another deputation of forty-five persons who were accompanied by so numerous an escort of armed horsemen, that it looked more like an army than a peaceful mission. The Abbot of Ager, who was at their head, represented to the king that the principality loudly demanded that his son should be set free ; that the people, whose minds were exasperated at the cruel treatment he had received, would be satisfied with nothing less than his liberation ; that he should have pity on him, not only for the prince's but his own sake ; that if he relied on succour from the Count de Foix and the King of France, he ought to remember that the French had once come to Gerona, but returned discomfited to their country in small numbers and without their king ; and finally admonished him not to provoke by his obstinacy the last extremes of public indignation. This was rather a menace than an entreaty ; and the monarch, who was of a proud and stubborn disposition, replied that he would do what duty and justice required of him, and added, in a threatening tone, "Remember that the king's wrath is the messenger of death."

In a report by the Chamber of Deputies of the principality which I have before me, it is stated that the king would not wait at Lérida to receive these last envoys, and that from dread of their escort, he fled by night to Fraga on foot and without having supped. Others place his flight from Lérida at a later date, when the threat made to him was put in execution, when he already saw the flames of sedition extending throughout Catalonia, and the din of war resounded in his ears.

The principality, therefore, finding that there was now no hope of remedy from submission or remonstrance, had recourse to arms. The royal banner and that of St. George waved to the clangour of the trumpet over the entrance of the Hall of Deputies ; the king's evil counsellors were denounced and threatened with punishment ; four-and-twenty galleys were ordered to be fitted out ; some of the gates of the city were closed, and guards were placed at others, and the deputies and judges shut themselves up in the House of Deputies, with the determination not to leave it until this important affair was brought to a conclusion. They began to collect and enrol men-at-arms and cross-bowmen, and the terrible cry of "Citizens to arms!" (*via fora somaten*) resounded everywhere, inflaming the minds of the people, and urging them to rise in defence of their prince. The baron of Montesa and Don Lopez Ximenez de Urrea who were sent beforehand by the king to restrain this agitation, failed completely in the attempt ; the Governor Galceran de Requesens, who was looked upon as one of the prince's accusers, fled from Bar-

celona when the standard of insurrection began to wave ; but he was afterwards taken at Molins del Rey, brought back to Barcelona, and placed in the city prison. The Catalan captains who were at Lérida issued forth with their banners flying, and marched upon Fraga, from which the king fled to Zaragoza, and the city and citadel surrendered to the insurgents. All Spain was now up in arms on behalf of the prince. The King of Arragon caused his troops to advance to the frontier in a threatening attitude ; the Beamontese raised their heads in Navarre, and the Constable their chief, eager to revenge the injuries of the prince as well as those of his own family, laid siege to Barja with a thousand Castilian lances. Zaragoza, in a state of great excitement, also loudly demanded the liberation of the heir to the crown, and the contagion extending from the centre to the extremities, the same clamours were heard, and the same evils threatened in Majorca, Sardinia, and Sicily.

The Prince of Viana triumphed in his prison over his vile enemies, who, at their wits-end and destitute of resources, did not well know what course to take. It was not then as after the battle of Aivar when, assisted by a faction, and supported by his Arragonese forces, the king oppressed the opposite party, and dictated laws to the conquered ; now all the estates of the kingdom loudly demanded the prisoner ; while the universal commotion and the progress made by the armed bands, did not give any truce to the king's alarm and anxiety, nor admit of any delay. He yielded at length, and granted the prince his liberty, which he pretended to do at the request of the queen, Don Carlos' step-

mother. She also took that honour to herself in a letter which she wrote to the deputies of the principality of Catalonia informing them that she had obtained from the king the liberation of his son, and that she intended to go to Morella and convey him herself from that fortress to Barcelona. This was done, and the prince immediately gave intimation of his deliverance from captivity to Sardinia and Sicily, and to all the princes who were his friends and allies. The letter which he wrote on that occasion to his friends at Barcelona is as follows : " To my good and true friends, the Deputies of the Principality of Catalonia :—To day at three o'clock in the afternoon the queen came and gave me full liberty, and we are both going to Barcelona, where I shall give you due thanks in person. Written in haste at Morella on the first day of March," —(1461).

These demonstrations deceived no one, and least of all the body of deputies, who sent envoys to receive and take charge of the prince's person, and to intimate to the queen that she should not come to Barcelona if she wished to avoid the disturbances which her presence would occasion. She stopped, therefore, greatly displeased, at Villafranca del Panadés, while the prince pursued his journey. He entered Barcelona on the twelfth of the same month at four in the morning. His entry was a more solemn triumph than would have been celebrated for a great victory, and it must have been the more agreeable as it was inspired by the general love and rejoicing of a whole people. From the bridge of San Boy to the city the road was occupied by a double file of cross-bowmen on each

side ; bands of little boys also went out to meet him, armed with juvenile weapons, and with demonstrations of joy at his liberation and happy arrival, saluted him shouting, " God keep you, Carlos, heir apparent of Arragon and Sicily ! " All Barcelona issued forth to welcome his arrival,—deputies, priests and nobles, not in bodies, but individually and on horseback, so that the great concourse had not the appearance of an arranged ceremony, but a spontaneous demonstration of joy and welcome. The files of soldiers extended round the walls of the city where he had to pass, and the Rambla was occupied by more than four thousand artisans, who were also armed. By these preparations Barcelona showed how great were the exertions it had made to bring about such a happy day ; and the great bonfires which blazed during the night completed the display of its satisfaction.

Negotiations were now entered into for the purpose of arresting the warlike movements which were threatening everywhere. The King of Castille was stationed in Navarre with a powerful army, and had already taken Viana and Lumbierre. The King of Arragon, had not sufficient forces to go and protect Navarre, for he could not avail himself of those of Catalonia, and the Arragonese themselves were very unwilling to become the oppressors of their Navarrese neighbours, or to interfere in matters which did not concern them. It was necessary, therefore, to conclude a peace without delay. The proposals made by the prince to his father were not certainly those of a proud man elated with his victory ; he begged to be proclaimed heir and successor, and to enjoy the pro-

rogatives belonging to him as such ; he stipulated that in room of the Countess de Foix another governor should be appointed over Navarre, but who should belong to the crown of Arragon, and that the castles and places of strength should be held for the king by subjects of that kingdom till his death, when the succession should fall to the prince. The queen also negotiated from Villafranca ; but the deputies sent by Barcelona to treat with her, proposed to her, perhaps prompted by feelings of hatred, such hard terms, that they seemed rather a mockery than the serious basis of an arrangement. They required that all the measures taken by them with reference to the prince's liberation, and in defence of his privileges, should be declared valid ; that Don Juan de Beamonte should be immediately set at liberty ; that all those who were counsellors to the King when the prince was imprisoned should be declared disqualified, and denuded of their offices, in which they should never be reinstated ; that the prince should receive the oath of allegiance as heir apparent and successor to all his father's dominions, as well as governor of them ; that he should have the administration of the principality and the counties of Roussillon and Sardinia, with the title of perpetual lieutenant ; that the king should not enter the principality ; that none but Catalans should be admitted to the council of the king and prince, that in case of Carlos dying without issue, his brother Ferdinand should be nominated for the same purpose, and with the same powers : and they offered to endow Don Carlos at once ; and to make a gift to the king of two hundred thousand livres if he assented to these conditions. They also

stipulated that no proceedings should ever be taken against any of the royal family or their children without the intervention of the principality of Catalonia, or of the deputies and council of the city of Barcelona. And finally, not satisfied with laying down the law at home, they wished also to settle the affairs of Navarre, and proposed that the government and the fortresses of that kingdom should be given in trust to Arragonese, Catalans, and Valencians.

The queen, astounded at such pretensions, and not venturing to make any agreement, went to Arragon to communicate them to the king, and she immediately returned, in order to go to Barcelona, and give an answer in person ; but she was again compelled to submit to the affront of being warned by the Chamber of Deputies, to abandon her design of entering the city. She felt most acutely these manifestations of the hatred with which she was regarded, and persisted in advancing towards the city, when the prince had to send her new envoys, excusing himself for the disagreeable necessity, but intimating to her that she must not approach within four leagues of Barcelona, and requesting her to declare to them the will of the king regarding the proposals made to her at Villa-franca. To this new annoyance was added another, which completely convinced her of the uselessness of her attempts to get admittance into the capital. She went as far as Tarrasa, intending to halt there to dine ; but the inhabitants of the town closed the gates, rose furiously in tumult, and sounded the alarm, as if they had been attacked by a band of robbers and malefactors. She was, therefore, obliged to go on to

Caldes, where she communicated the king's resolution to the Catalans.

Strange to tell, that monarch, who was so proud and obstinate, agreed to grant to the principality all the conditions which were proposed to him, with the exception of the royal jurisdiction which was claimed for his successor, and the power of holding and presiding over the Cortes ; and he even offered, in spite of the shame and humiliation it cost him, not to enter Barcelona until the disputes should be settled ; but he positively refused his assent to the condition proposed regarding Navarre, as if all his honour and glory consisted in the rejection of the fairest and justest of all the stipulations made by the prince, which was, to restore what he had usurped. The ambassadors were so displeased at this, that they refused even to listen to the other declarations which the queen was empowered to make. When she saw that they were firm in their determination, she told them that she had ample authority to conclude an agreement, and that if she were allowed to enter Barcelona, she would, within three days, arrange matters to the satisfaction of the deputies. The emissaries returned with this answer ; but as it was whispered in Barcelona that there were persons in the city who had a secret intelligence with the queen, the people rose in tumult, and were so furiously determined to sally forth against her, that she was obliged to return to Martorell, and thence back to Villafranca.

In that town the queen at length signed an agreement, the principal conditions of which were, that the prince should be the king's perpetual lieutenant in

Catalonia, and that his father should not enter that principality. This news caused great joy in Barcelona, where the inhabitants had processions, illuminations, and all sorts of games, in order to celebrate the event. The prince swore solemnly that he would preserve the institutions of the principality, the customs of Barcelona, and the other liberties of the country ; on this occasion he conferred on several citizens the honour of knighthood ; and when he went forth from the church, he passed through the streets with a drawn sword carried before him, as became his dignity, and was hailed by the acclamations and applause of the whole people.

This new authority was not exercised by him in persecuting and destroying those who had been opposed to him during the course of this tedious business. Galceran de Requesens, formerly governor of Catalonia, who was accused of many crimes, and of having done great injury to the liberties of the country, and who was believed to be one of those who had instigated the king against his son, did not receive any other punishment than exile. With regard to others who were regarded as suspicious, and not well affected to his party, he was satisfied with sending a list of them to the Chamber, with the request that none of them should be thenceforward elected as deputies or magistrates. One day he went from Barcelona to Villafranca in order to chastise a rebel, but when he arrived there he pardoned him.

But in spite of the agreement entered into, as the reconciliation was forced, and his father had submitted to the arrangement with great reluctance, the mutual

distrust of the two parties remained as before. The Catalans, in order to engage the prince to take a more active course, swore fidelity to him, as heir apparent, on the 30th of July. This act was solemnly celebrated, in the hall of the royal palace. When the formula was to be read, the prince declined hearing it, saying, he well knew that the city and its magistrates would only do their duty, as their ancestors had done before them ; and when the syndics who were appointed, went, after taking the oaths, to kiss his hand, he told them with a gracious smile and courteous language, to rise ; and rising himself from his seat, he bowed to them, and placed his hands familiarly on their shoulders. He reposed great confidence in Castille ; but its king was of so feeble a character that he could not guarantee any other security than what suited the interests of the Marquis of Villena, by whom he was completely led. The Castilian partisans of the King of Arragon, at the head of whom was the Admiral and the Archbishop of Toledo, endeavoured to gain over the marquis, and were trying to defeat the negotiations which had been entered into since the liberation of the prince, with regard to a marriage between him and the Infanta Doña Isabella. Besides, the King of Castille, annoyed at the little progress he was making in Navarre, spoke of returning to his own kingdom, and abandoning that undertaking. In this uncertainty, Don Carlos and the principality sent to the King of Arragon a solemn embassy, in order to induce him to confirm anew the agreement entered into with the queen, and afterwards to go to Castille to conclude the matrimonial alliance.

The king who had a great horror at this match, detained the ambassadors under the pretext that it was not becoming in him to engage in such a negotiation while the King of Castile was carrying on a furious war against him. Moreover, he sent to Catalonia his chief confidant, the prothonotary Antonio Nogueras, in order to communicate the cause of the detention. When his envoy came, and was introduced into the presence of the prince ; the latter, after receiving his salutation, and without allowing him to begin his message, said to him in a tone which contrasted with his usual mildness and moderation, “ I am astonished, Nogueras, at two things ; one is that my lord the king did not choose a more acceptable person than you to send me, and the other that you should have the boldness to come into my presence. Do you not remember that when I was a prisoner in Zaragoza, you had the audacity to come with paper and ink to examine me, and to hear my deposition as to the infamous charges which were then brought against me. I beg you to know that I never call to mind that proceeding without losing my temper ; and be assured, that if it were not for the reverence I owe to the king my sovereign, from whom you come, I would thrust you forth without the tongue with which you interrogated me, and the hand with which you wrote. Do not then provoke me further ; I beg and command you to leavethis, for I cannot bear to look upon a man who could trump up such vile slanders against me.” Nogueras wished to answer and satisfy him, but the prince said to him : “ Begone I repeat, and do not blow a coal which is already in a flame.” The envoy left

Barcelona the same day, but, at the request of the Chamber of Deputies, the prince allowed him to return and tell them his message, but would not permit him to come again into his presence. The king was much offended at this occurrence, and the prince was not less indignant at the opposition which has father raised to his designs. Don Carlos' complaints resounded in Spain, France, and Italy, for at this time his position and dignity were respected by many potentates of Europe, who already corresponded with him as a sovereign. Notwithstanding this he was always in dread of the intrigues of his father and stepmother, who had now almost won over the King of Castille to their side, and were tampering with the fidelity and damping the zeal of many of the principal persons in Catalonia, who thought of submitting to his authority. In this conflict, he applied for succour to Louis the Eleventh, King of France, who had just succeeded his father, and with whom he had had an alliance when he was dauphin. He desired him to assist him in recovering his kingdom of Navarre from his father and the Count de Foix, the principal promoter of the disturbances in that country, and said to him that as God had placed him in so high a position, he ought as his kinsman to assist him, inasmuch as they were cousins, and he proposed to marry a sister of that king, and offered at the same time to give his sister Doña Blanca in marriage to Philibert Count of Geneva, prince of Savoy and nephew to Louis. By means of these marriages and that alliance he expected to recover his dominions in Navarre, and make up for the loss of strength he sustained by the desertion of the King of Castille.

But the dénouement of this tragedy was gradually advancing. The health of the prince, who had never felt well since he left his imprisonment at Morella, was completely destroyed by the cares and uncertainty with which his lot was surrounded ; he fell seriously ill about the middle of September, and died on the twenty-third day of the same month (1461). The counsellors of Barcelona were present at his deathbed, and he said to them, knowing that his end was approaching : “ My case is to be published.” He then received the consolations of religion and asked pardon of all for the trouble and annoyance he had caused them, with so much meekness and gentleness that they burst into tears ; soon afterwards he expired between three and four in the morning. His death was a heavy affliction to the inhabitants of Barcelona, by whom he was much beloved, and who had cherished great hopes of his career ; and at his obsequies, which were célébrated with all the pomp and magnificence worthy of a king, the most graceful and solemn tribute to his memory was the universal grief and mourning which prevailed among the immense concourse of people. His body remained for many years in the presbytery of the cathedral, until his father the king ordered it to be taken to Poblet, where it lies in a tomb covered with black velvet, in the mausoleum of the dukes of Segovia.

The fanaticism and perhaps the political enthusiasm of the Catalans would have made a saint of him ; and they immediately began to publish miracles which God had wrought through his intercession. But without having recourse to such means, which reason and

common sense now equally reject, it may be safely asserted that the world lost in him the best and most accomplished prince of his times. His father, John the Second of Arragon, keeping his military talents out of view, can only be regarded as a turbulent and factious meddler, who both as a king and as a man, kept himself and others in constant disquietude ; Henry of Castille was an imbecile ; Louis the Eleventh, a treacherous and sanguinary despot ; Ferdinand of Naples, as a politician, was suspicious, perfidious, and justly hated ; Alfonso of Portugal, restless, ambitious and unfortunate, is only known by his ill-starred and unsuccessful pretensions to Castille. The Emperor of Germany, Frederick the Third, weak, superstitious, indolent and avaricious, was held in universal contempt throughout Italy and Germany. All of them, with the exception of Ferdinand, were rude and barbarous, and all reigned ; while he who received the best education, and who, reared in peaceful pursuits, gave himself up to study, not for the purpose of passing his time vainly and idly, but to perfect himself in those branches of knowledge, without which states cannot be well established or governed ; he who, during the nine years of his administration in Navarre, gave proofs of his moderation and justice ; he whom the wishes, the applause, the acclamations of all the peoples to whom he was known, invited to rule and govern them, came to an unhappy end, after a long struggle for his existence, hated and persecuted by his father, and despoiled of his rightful possessions and prerogatives.

He had completed his fortieth year when he died.

He was married to Anne of Cleves, who died without issue in 1448 ; but he had several natural children—Don Philip of Navarre, Count of Beaufort, by Doña Brianda Vaca ; Doña Anna by Doña Maria Armentariz ; and Don Juan Alonso, by a Sicilian of humble rank, but exquisite beauty. His stature was somewhat above the common, his countenance thin, his demeanour grave, and his expression melancholy. His mother, in order to teach him liberality, gave him daily when he was a boy a few gold crowns for distribution, and his munificence and generosity, when a youth and when arrived at man's estate, corresponded to this early habit. Study was his solace in adversity, and the friend and companion of his solitude and retirement. The reading of the classic authors, the composition of several works in prose and verse, and correspondence with the learned men of his time, occupied those hours which in other princes would have been spent in tedium and misery or in dissipation and debauchery. Among the men of letters with whom he corresponded, the one who filled the highest place in his estimation was Ausias Marc, the chief of the troubadours at that time. The remembrance of the prince's occupations, and his love of books, remained in Sicily a hundred years later, when the annalist Zurita travelled there. He wrote a history of the Kings of Navarre ; he translated the moral philosophy of Aristotle, and he composed numerous *trovas*, which he used to sing to the guitar with grace and expression. He took great delight in music, and had a particular aptitude for all the arts, especially painting. He bore as his device two furious bloodhounds quarrelling about a

bone, an emblem of the contest between the Kings of France and Castille for the kingdom of Navarre, which was now almost worn out with its civil dissensions. His disposition and habits were such as they have been described in the course of this narrative, which is neither chargeable with partiality nor enmity, but founded on data furnished us by contemporary monuments. Even the historians, who, for the most part, belong to the winning side, and who have endeavoured to fasten on his character the possession of ambitious views and rebellious tendencies, cannot but admit that attractive combination in his person of talents, virtues, discretion and liberality, by which he secured the affections both of individuals and nations. When these qualities are considered, we see the justice of the remark with which the severe Mariana winds up his description of him:—"A youth most worthy of a better fortune and a milder father."

When his friends saw that he was dying, they wished to remain faithful even to his memory, and to obey only such as were sprung from him: they, therefore, advised him to celebrate his marriage with Doña Brianda Vaca and legitimize Don Philip, his son by her. He did not consent, whether to avoid giving occasion for further disturbances, or whether he did not consider that lady worthy of the honour to which it was desired that she should be raised. As he was not much satisfied with her conduct, he had a short time before separated her from her son, whom he recommended to the care of a gentleman of Barcelona called Bernardo Zapila, and he placed his son under the guardianship of Don Hugo de Cardona, governor of Bellpuig.

The moment his father was informed of his death, he caused his son Ferdinand to be sworn heir to the kingdom of Arragon, and the Queen brought the latter to Catalonia, in order that the principality should also swear allegiance to him, as was stipulated in the treaty of Villafranca. The Catalans did not refuse to comply with this condition, but they firmly resisted the entrance of the king, whom they detested.

The queen, whether for form's sake, or to gratify her curiosity, went with her ladies to see the chapel where lay the body of the prince, and when she came to it, she made the sign of the cross over it, and kissed it. If the prince could have wrought miracles, as his partisans fondly believed, he ought to have intimated by some sign or other that he rejected that homage, which, considering the person who paid it, and the time when it was offered, could only be regarded as a flagrant and scandalous sacrilege. A few days afterwards the prince's confectioner died, and it began to be rumoured that his death was caused by taking certain pills, some of which had been given to Don Carlos when he was in the castle of Morella. The queen gave permission to open his body, and it was found that his lungs were, as in the case of the Prince, in a state of putrefaction. These symptoms, added to the suspicion which had been formerly awakened by the animosity of his stepmother being suddenly changed into demonstrations of affection after he obtained his liberty, excited the minds of the Catalans to such a degree that they denounced their king as a parricide and an enemy to the country, renounced their oath of allegiance, and broke out into open rebellion against him. They

offered themselves first to the King of Castille, who, at the beginning, lent a willing ear to the proposal, but at last he declined it, whether from moderation or weakness. They then invited Don Pedro, infant of Portugal, whom they proclaimed King of Arragon and Count of Barcelona, but he soon after died of poison. After his death they thought of erecting themselves into a republic; but the opinion that they should obtain succour from without obtained greater support, and they, therefore, invited Réné of Anjou, who, although old and broken down, came to take possession of the sovereignty with a numerous escort of Frenchmen. His death, which was caused by a fever, when his affairs were in the most flourishing condition, destroyed the hopes of the Catalans, who, after a vigorous resistance, at length agreed to render obedience to King Juan, but under very favourable conditions. In this way, Catalonia continued for ten years longer to be a scene of havoc and confusion; and the deaths which this civil war occasioned were so many victims which the Catalans consecrated to the memory of the unhappy prince who was their idol.

The ancient chronicles of Castille assert that he died of paralysis, and that the charge of poisoning is a fable like that of the miracles, and that of the apparition of Don Carlos' ghost calling for vengeance on his stepmother, which were invented, they say, in order to irritate the minds of the people and foment sedition. In the matter of so serious an accusation, nothing should be affirmed without the greatest circumspection. But these chroniclers were paid by Ferdinand the Catholic, the person who was most benefited by the ruin of

Don Carlos: on the other hand, the rancorous hatred of the queen, her ambitious desire that her son should reign, his father's anger, his rage at being obliged to release him from prison by the clamour of the indignant people, the fact that the prince did not enjoy a single day's health since he left the castle of Morella, the prevalence at that period of this infamous practice, and the death of the confectioner, which was so similar in its nature to that of his master, are circumstances which, taken together, furnish strong grounds for crediting the accusation; and, if we add to them the barbarous treatment which his sister Doña Blanca received at the hands of the queen, they assume the character of almost conclusive evidence.

That unfortunate princess had against her the several circumstances that she greatly resembled Don Carlos, and had always attached herself to his lot, and that she was to be lawful sovereign of Navarre, in case of his death. Her father had included her in the same proscription with the prince, and one of the conditions on which the Count de Foix came from France to assist him in his wars in Catalonia, was that Blanca must renounce her right to the succession, become a nun, or be delivered up to the count. After her brother's death, the king kept her a prisoner in different fortresses, in order that she might not fall into the hands of the Beamontese; but when it was resolved that he should fulfil his inhuman compact, he intimated to her that she must prepare to cross the Pyrenees with him, in order to visit the King of France, to whose brother, the Duke de Berry, she was to be given in marriage. She answered that she did not wish to commit suicide,

and that she would not go on any account. Her tears and entreaties, instead of softening that monster's heart, only rendered it harder and more inexorable, and, at length, he ordered that she should be carried away by force, and her guards doubled. In order that her custody should be more secure, he gave her person in charge to Pedro de Peralta, the sternest and fiercest of the Agramontese chiefs, by whom she was conducted to Marcilla, and lodged in his own house. It is said, that the unhappy princess there begged him "to take compassion, as a knight, on the most afflicted and unprotected woman that ever lived, and as a good vassal, on the daughter of his queen Doña Blanca, and grand-daughter of Don Carlos, to whom he and his family had been indebted for their rise, and added that if he did so, her father would approve of his resolution, when he came to view it calmly; she entreated him also not to remove her from his house and take her to Bearne, where they would put an end to her as they had done in Spain to her brother." Her barbarous gaoler, however, carried her thence with violence, and brought her to the convent of Roncesvalles, where she found means of deceiving her guards and executing a renunciation of her rights in favour of the King of Castille, or the Count de Armagnac; declaring at the same time that any deeds of renunciation by her that might be produced, in favour of her sister the Countess de Foix or Prince Ferdinand, should be null and void, because extorted by threats and violence. When she found afterwards that she was going to be delivered up into the hands of her enemies, and that her life as well as her succession were at stake, she solemnly deprived

her brother and sister of her inheritance, and made a grant of her dominions of Navarre, and others belonging to her, to Henry the Fourth, King of Castille, whom she entreated and implored to rescue her, or take vengeance for her and her brother's calamities, and to remember their former love and ~~on~~ on, which, although unfortunate, had still been those of husband and wife. At St. Jean de Pied le Port, she was delivered up to the Captal de Buch, in name of the Count and Countess de Foix, and conveyed to the castle of Orthez, where she was soon after poisoned by the orders of her sister, and died on the 2nd of December, 1464. Thus the path to the throne was made straight for unprincipled ambition. The Countess de Foix succeeded to the throne of Navarre, as the reward of fratricide ; and the son of Doña Juana Enriquez became monarch of Arragon, Castille, and Sicily. Although his great talents, together with the splendour and prosperity of his reign, effaced, in some degree, the horror of so many crimes.

THE END.



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